

SPECIAL JAMES DEAN ISSUE • COLLECTORS ITEM
PLUS: JIM BACKUS • GEORGE KUCAR • FASSBINDER • ELVIRA



17

\$3.50 U.S.
\$4.50 CAN.
£3.00 U.K.

SEPTEMBER 30
1955
NEVER
HAPPENED



GLEBARR



DAVE'S COMICS AND COLLECTIBLES

VINTAGE TOYS, ROCK-ROLL STUFF,
MODELS, POSTERS, MOVIE/TV MEMORABILIA,
BUTTONS, COLOSSAL SELECTION OF NEW AND
BACK ISSUE COMICS, GRAPHIC NOVELS, IMPORTS,
MORE, MORE, MORE

DAVE'S ONE
407 S. WASHINGTON
ROYAL OAK, MI. 48067
(313) 548-1230

DAVE'S TWO
623 WILLIAMS (AT STATE)
ANN ARBOR, MI. 48104
(313) 665-6969



Table of Contents

- 4 HATE MAIL
Letters from our readers. Fuck 'em!
- 6 EDITORIAL
Pretentious babblings from the Publisher.
- 7 SHORTS
Reviews (yuck!) of weird videos and books.
- 9 FAMOUS EXTRAS: **JIM BACKUS**
Good ol' Mr. Magoo talks about Jimmy Dean.
- 12 A VISIT TO JAMES DEAN'S HOMETOWN
by Chris Gore
- 18 JAMES DEAN INTERVIEW
Questions I wish I could ask him.
by Chris Gore
- 20 JAMES DEAN DEATH CULT
Teenage fanatacism and the rebel.
by Jim Thompson
- 28 DEAN'S INFLUENCE
an interview with William F. Nolan
by Tim Caldwell

- 31 SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1955
NEVER HAPPENED!
by Chris Gore
- 39 FASSBINDER INTERVIEW
The candid interview continues . . .
by Boze Hadleigh
- 46 POSITIVE/NEGATIVE
What do you say to an art fag? or
The merits of film school
by David Williams
- 49 CREEPY RICK'S CRYPT: **ELVIRAI**
An intimate interview plus the Vampira lawsuit
and don't forget those tits!
- 54 THE FILM THREAT INTERVIEW:
GEORGE KUCHAR
The King of New York's film underground
of the 60s speaks to Pat Hollis & Jack Stevenson.
- 59 ADVERTISEMENTS
Keep us in business.

PUBLISHER/EDITOR
Christian Gore

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Tim Caldwell

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT
Legs McNeil

COVER
Glenn Barr

HEADINGS
Paul Zimmerman
Rick Morris

PUBLICITY
Jonathan Marder & Associates

SPECIAL EVENTS
Gerard Kent

CONTRIBUTORS

Jim Thompson, Boze Hadleigh, Jack Stevenson, Pat Hollis, David Williams, Scott Parish, Rick Ruby, Ellen Sawyer, & Chris Swanberg.

DEDICATION

This Issue is dedicated to Glenn Barr. His patience, talent and friendship keeps my life interesting. And besides, Glenn looks like James Dean.

SPECIAL THANKS

To James Dean because . . . well, without having died we wouldn't be able to make money off his fans like you who paid \$3.50 for this mag. Also thanks to Julie Robertson, Christine Tindel, Kris Gilpin, Gary Arnett, Bill Greenshields, Dave Higgins & Scott Mitchell—thanks for nothing.

ADS

(313) 545-GORE

or 545-4673 if you are too lazy to look at the letters on your phone.

Entire contents © 1988 FILM THREAT, INC. ISSN # 0896-6389 FILM THREAT is published 6 times a year except when crack dealers rip off my apartment and steal everything I own. Subscription prices are as follows: \$16 United States, \$21 Canadian, \$26 Foreign. Only U.S. funds accepted. Address all threats to PO BOX 951, ROYAL OAK, MI 48068 USA. Editorial offices (313) 545-4673. Call or send for our ad rates. ATTENTION BOOK STORES! If the distributor in your area does not carry FILM THREAT, deal with us direct. Write for details. Any unsolicited material is considered ours to use in the mag. Videos, movies, books, and other mags are considered for review and are also real cool 'cause I like to get things for FREE. If you keep reading this small print you will go insane. STOP, while you still have a mind of your own. STOP NOW! Don't read any further than this. Put the magazine down and go back to your job. Just put the magazine down or turn the page. You do not realize the irreversible damage that is being done to you even now! Too late.



Hate Mail

P.O. BOX 951, Royal Oak, MI, 48068 U.S.A

SCREAM THERAPY

Yes I am a small time super 8 movie maker. Me and a few friends of mine have made 5 movies a total of 3 1/2 hours of film we know nothing about films but we learned as we went along. But now I have a problem we want to make our movies more public we have just been showing the movies to friends and everybody says they are entertaining. I think we have the magic to make movies work but we are poor and not too business oriented. So I am writing for help.

I live in Detroit
number
(313) 371-7246 or leave message at
(313) 574-0030

my name is Aaron Tudgeon

Aaron Tudgeon
16080 Faircrest
Detroit MI
48205

please call

Aaron,
I first of all should apologize because the only advice I can think of is to get a gun and go kill yourself but that doesn't solve your problem. I know a lot of our readers may have a few suggestions. So readers, don't hesitate to write. Bug this weasel. (Also, if you're one of the millions of Americans in need of SCREAM THERAPY, call his number.)

FILM IS LIGHT IS ART IS...

C. GORE: THIS "MANIFEST"
D. SIGNED FOR YA. MAGAZINE.
PLS SEND COPY(S) F. T(H)REAT
FOR REVIEW IN UPCOMING (MAY)
SOLAR PLEXUS (ISSUE): SUPER 8
EDISON.



TO: FILM THREAT

FROM: EDISON LIGHT BULB ORCHESTRA

ELBO IS A PROJECT/NAME OPEN TO ANYONE USING LIGHT AS A PERFORMANCE MEDIUM. WE ARE PARTICULARLY FOND OF THE SUPER 8 FILM PROJECTOR. THE ORCHESTRA IS A GROUP OF PROJECTORS COMBINED TO PRESENT A FIELD OF IMAGES AS 1 FILM-EVENT. (AS 1 PROJECTOR PERFORMS A SOLO OR "RECITAL", 2 PROJECTORS A DUET,...).

NSHR IS A PROJECT/NAME OPEN TO ANYONE USING RADIO AS A VISUAL MEDIUM. NOW SEE HEAR RADIO INTENDS TO SHOW THE INVISIBLE OPERATIONS OF THE RADIO STATION, THE ORIGINS BEHIND TRANSMITTED SOUND.

BEN FRANKLIN RADIO ASSEMBLY IS A PROJECT/NAME OPEN TO ANYONE USING RADIO(S) IN A PERFORMANCE SITUATION. (WE AMPLIFIED KITES, THE KITE STRING WAS BOTH TRANSMITTER + TRANSMISSION. WE AMPLIFIED FANS, THE WIND AGAIN WAS OUR "CURRENT".)

JOHNSON + JOHNSON IS A PROJECT/NAME OPEN TO ANYBODY(S) PERFORMING MUSIC/SOUND AS A GROUP (PERHAPS A SOLO PERFORMER IS SIMPLY "JOHNSON"). THE ANONYMOUS NATURE OF ALL THESE PROJECTS CELEBRATES MOMENTS OF CREATION + IMPROVISATION AS COLLECTIVE ACTIVITY WHILE RECOGNIZING THE POVERTY OF CALCULATED ART/CAREERS IN SEARCH OF A NAME.

CONTACT: EDISON, BOX 441275, SOM MA. 02144 USA.
LIGHT BULB
ORCHESTRA

Hey E.L.B.O.,
Why does the word pretentious come to mind when I read your letter? I don't know. You decide.

RESPONSE TO VIDEO THREAT

Dear Film Threat:

In response to Brian's letter, "VIDEO THREAT", FT-16. First of all we'd like to say that careful review of Brian's letter obviously reveals that he's a brain dead, pencil dick.

Secondly, and most unbelievably, we agree with one thing that that cum glob has to say: the story and character are very important aspects of modern film. After that, his lame-dick, neo-revolutionary drabble makes us want to blow chunks. We think that Brian is the one who ought to grow up. Hey dick brain, how long has the industry been pushing film, huh? Who do you think they are trying to please? The people right? What you're asking us to do is to change our format to please the people. What fucking people?! You and all the other fags that think that any fucking piece of celluloid, with a half decent theme, that looks like my three year old grabbed my camcorder will pass with the American public?! Wrong pecker head. The industry caters to the people. The same people who run the industry now will run it tomorrow. Do you know why? Because they know what people want to see. You obviously have no clue to what the people want to see. That's why you're trying to change the face of modern film by writing your impudent little letter, in hopes of finding some other obviously pea-brained supporters, in an inconsequential fucking rag like Film Threat.

People like a good picture. That's the facts numb-nuts. Video is not film's biggest threat either. And if it was, we'd have to say that they obviously have nothing to worry about. Independent filmmakers won't be a threat at all if they take your worthless advice. (Not that they ever were) You and Gore are fucked up. Neither one of you pose a threat to the motion picture industry. Independent films are great. We spend a good deal of money to obtain them and collect them. But why do you pin heads think that one has to replace the other. They're coexisting now. Very happily I must add. But why do something really fucking ignorant like pitting one against the other. If it comes down to a motion picture power struggle between Spielberg and Joe Christ, who do you think will end up on top? Grow up needle head. Here's two votes for coexistence. Don't start a fight you can't win.

Accusingly yours,

DAVE & RAY
Dave and Ray

Dave & Ray,

Thanks. It's good to know somebody has all the answers. You guys sound like you would be no fun at a party. I don't know why I get that impression. Also, only chickenshits do not include a return address with their letter. This is the last time I print a letter without a return address! Okay weasels.

NO COUNTER-CULTURE IN NYC?

CHRIS -

I didn't realize John Spencer from Red gave indie films. What films? Do you have any copies? And tell OGM Jankoff that the Lozmar Lounge is still open and the only people who think there is no counter culture in N.Y. are the people who have inserted their heads up their own asses (without a condom) permanently.

LATER,
Michelle

Michelle,

Tell us, how do you go about doing that insertion thing?

MESSAGE TO FILM STUDENTS

This letter is addressed to my film students who may be reading this:

You think you're hot shit right? Yeah, just like the ~~punk~~ asshole I went to school with (bunch of dicks!).

You think you're doing congru Hollywood or worse yet, prime time tv. Huh?

You've got resumes covered with bullshit and have contacts and frat members that you can suck up to/ass kiss (or as you so stylishly call it - "networking") in order to get some boys entry-level job on some dim-witted talk show or inner action pic. Do I have your number?

Well fuck you! Rot in hell, swinging breath. Go ahead, keep churning out the same old drivel. Maintain the status quo. I hope you all, you lying, scheming, no-talent douche-bags. Drop dead!

Brian,

Just because you couldn't afford to go to film school is no reason to criticise the efforts of others. Sour grapes will just cause more hatred in a world so desperately in need of love.

BOOKSTORE EMPLOYEE STRIPS MAGAZINES

Dear Film Threat,

Now that I work at a bookstore, I no longer need to subscribe to the bi-monthly bowel movement that you call a film magazine. I strip the cover (which is always sick beyond words anyway) and take the rest (the filler) home. Also, I delight in putting Film Threat next to Premiere on the magazine rack (where it justly belongs since you would see yourself as significant - the only difference is you can't afford to pay Tom Cruise to mix drinks for the cover). Come to think of it, maybe I'll strip the entire magazine from now on, before it can seriously affect anyone, and use it for packing material when I send unsold copies of Premiere back to its distributor.

Keep up the good work.

Bill Ellis

Bill,

Why don't you steal copies from the store. We still get paid for them. I would appreciate it. Thanks.



Editorial

ARC AMERICAN
LAST TEMPTATION
174465
18:18
2157
\$4.75
06/25/88
AD

CONFESSIONS OF A DEANOPHILE

If any movie actor living or dead were said to embody a cult figure status, the only person that comes to mind for me is James Dean.

I first saw EAST OF EDEN and REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE on a double bill at the Punch and Judy theater when I was 16. I stayed to see EDEN a second time. Six full hours of movie watching and I filled with excitement. Energized. Like I had just run a mile. I walked out of the theater stunned. I had found my calling to the movies.

I had to know everything about him. Read every book, every article. The films were of interest, but not essential. James Dean, the actor, the risk taker, the man who lived 36 hours a day, who tried everything, who didn't take any shit and told the truth. This is who I wanted to find out about.

Even now, as I write this I have some reservation about finishing this issue. I want it to be perfect. To live up to a man whose work and life I admire, and myself try to emulate James Dean. A myth, an icon, a legend and a human.



An illustration of Dean I did at 17 showing I have no talent in drawing whatsoever.

THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIS

Great. I thought to myself as I anticipated another good ol' time with Catholic protesters. Martin Scorsese's THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST opened with all the hoopla of a Papal visit, with a slightly different mood. I thought perhaps Universal Pictures hired actors to protest the film? No way, these were the real thing. Chanting and bouncing about, no starving method actor could have imitated that crazed, born-again, blank stare. I was mildly entertained by their antics. The first five rows of the theater were roped off (on recommendation from the distributor) to prevent any present day sermons (on the movie).

Personally, I don't even care for movies on Jesus in the first place. The myth is so tired and overdone. I always find myself bored to death. I liked Charlton Heston in THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, that was a real cool movie. But Jesus, there's no action, and the part about being crucified seems so contrived. Lucky he didn't die on the toilet like Elvis or churches and rosaries everywhere would be graced with dumpers as their symbol of worship. If you think about it, it is kind of sick. This guy dead nailed to a cross as an icon for a religion . . . anyway, back to the movie.

Dull. I thought if Scorsese was involved it would at least have some of his technique. None. Or he would make Jesus an asshole like all the characters that Marty embarks to explore. Nope. In fact, I fell asleep. I was fortunately startled to consciousness by an explosion somewhere at the end of the film. WOW.

Well, the bottom line is the film will make money. This reminds me, I've got to get back to my screenplay about Jesus reincarnated in the 80s as a Yuppie, it's trendy. Hopefully some one will come out to protest it.

Goodbuy until next ish,

Chris Gore

CHRIS GORE

SHORTS

REVIEWS. I HATE 'EM. YOU HATE 'EM. WELL THESE ARE THINGS YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT. REALLY. CHECK IT OUT.

Reviews by Chris Gore

COOL TEENAGER FROM THE PLANET X

\$20.00 ppd. VHS/BETA

FILM THREAT VIDEO
PO BOX 951
ROYAL OAK, MI 48068



STEPHAN STRANGE In COOL TEENAGER FROM THE PLANET X

So, I made the film and I'm writing about it in my own magazine. Nobody else is going to write about it. Many people have asked me what this film is about and I am unable to give any answer other than some blow off line like, "It's a film about adolescent alienation." In order to avoid talking about the film myself I received a letter after the world

premiere at the Majestic Theater in Detroit on August 18th. The letter reads:

Dear Chris,
I have just seen your movie COOL TEENAGER FROM THE PLANET X.
Undoubtedly, the artistic merits of the film will be debated (hopefully) by the self-appointed critics and others who feel the need to gossip with little understanding about other's work.

The comments I make would be characterized as social criticism. The word should probably be political, but that seems to be such a harsh word in our comfortable world and polarizes people. X's days in the Cass Corridor left me with a smug satisfaction that the story of many white guys' experience in Detroit's urban ghetto was being told. Planet X, located smack dab in the middle of Detroit is a very strange and unique place. You and I and some of our friends personally know the isolation that is imposed on the white male seeking the urban lifestyle of Detroit.

Indeed, one may as well reside on another planet. The landscape is prophetic of the post apocalyptic era. It is littered with the wreckage and trash and shattered dreams of a wounded city.

Strangely, the home planet, normal, white suburban civilization, is only twenty minutes down the freeway, yet at times is a million light years away. When on Planet X, your skin color sets you off from the native dark-skinned population that speak an alien tongue and embrace strange cultural and economic-criminal mores. Going to the store on X is always fun, shouting at brown-skinned aliens through bullet-proof glass who carry guns and sell twinkies and red pop. I carried a gun or a club when I travelled on foot on Planet X. Pimps and drug dealers were known by their first names. We got drunk and climbed around the same gutted buildings as did the Cool Teenager.

We have all had our ratty little



STEPHAN explores decayed buildings in Detroit's Cass Corridor in COOL TEENAGER FROM THE PLANET X.

apartments burgled and our TV's sold for a rock or two. If you stay on Planet X long enough they will rob you enough to make moving out easy. The last time we were robbed they took our guns, that was enough for me, bye, bye, Planet X.

The Cool Teenager's sex life was pretty funny. But, perhaps not as much fun as the real sex life on Planet X. For some reason, the uptight women with lemons between their knees from suburbia just loved to come on down to the ghetto crib. We even had a name for it: The Eight Mile Wet Panty Factor. Apparently as soon as the gals got south of Eight, they got real hot. (It must've been that city air.)

I am very pleased you made X. There are many other white boys who have done their time in the ghetto on Planet X, in and around the Cass Corridor, who will be equally pleased that someone has captured even if vaguely, the story of life on that alien planet.

Best,
Doug Blair

Thanks Doug. I'm glad someone understood exactly what I was trying to do. It's interesting the way life imitates art. My apartment was ripped off about two weeks after I received this letter. The local crack-heads took everything. That is the reason this issue is so late. I had to re-do virtually the whole magazine. Not only did they take my tv,

jambox, computer (who cares, they're replaceable) but they also stole the master copy of COOL TEENAGER on video. I will have to re-edit the entire thing. I even tried to buy back my stuff from the local crackhouse. A few words of advice. Do not threaten crack dealers. They have guns and will kill you. Life is like a violent tv movie in the war zone except it's real. In any case, the film will be available for sale after December 1st if anyone out there is interested.

CHEAP PEEKS Greatest Hits

Send for info

CHEAP PEEKS Fan Club
402 A Buena Vista Circle
Austin, TX 78746



Cable TV goes to the dogs.

This is exactly what those nasty politicians feared about public access on cable TV. The power of media would be in the hands of the people. These guys are the B-movie answer to Siskel and Ebert. They review everything from old John Waters films like *Multiple Maniacs* to *Woman in the Dunes*. But don't let that fool you. These guys may dress up in funny outfits like slices of toast, but they know film. All kinds of mind-numbing bluescreen effects surround them as they give their witty and often dull reviews. I played the tape at a party without the sound and people actually watched it. Great ambience.

THE CONFESSIONS OF BERNARD GOETZ

\$39.95 (Also send for catalog)

M.P.I. Home Video
15825 Rob Roy Dr.
Oak Forest, IL 60452
1(800) 323-0442

MPI VIDEO NEWS MAGAZINE The Confessions Of BERNHARD GOETZ



"If I had more bullets I would have shot them again and again, my problem was I ran out of bullets"

From the same people who brought you *Faces of Death* comes Bernie Goetz spilling his guts right in your own living room. The legalities of such a tape are questionable so you better hurry and get this one before it's too late. *Faces of Death* is no longer available but M.P.I. keeps ahead of the rest by offering such great vid-picks as *Hollywood: Scandals and Tragedies*, *Coverup: Behind the Iran-Contra Affair*, *The Plot to Kill Robert Kennedy*. Not your local 7-11 vid night. M.P.I. has always been bold in carrying documentaries and films of a subversive nature. Goetz's tape will hopefully open the door for other tapes of the same nature. Just imagine it—*Manson's Closing Arguments*, *Bundy's Black Book*, *Gacy's Guide to Clown Make-up* and more!

THE ROAD TRIP / INFINITY CITY & MARDI GRAS 1988

\$25 each, more titles available, write for details.

WORLD VIDEO
PO BOX 850425
New Orleans, LA 70185

Dan Weisman has this to say about his videos:

All my videos utilize revolutionary video photography techniques—the real thing

with a camera, not a computer—and the hottest new music from around the country. Also, the concept of a video artist making videos for the home market and distributing them directly is something of the future. I use 3/4" production and editing equipment and a three tube video camera and am able to ship direct any number of orders. Besides technique, the *Mardi Gras* tape, for example is also appealing for subject matter and shows exactly the way it is...



If you think an out of focus, shakey, unwatchable camera style is a revolutionary video technique, you should buy these videos. At least so this guy can afford a tripod. Perhaps these videos could be used as a How-Not-To class because he makes every technical error in the book and without the pizzazz of a John Waters or an Ed Wood. The content isn't even interesting on scan speed. Boring.

BOOK REVIEW

SOMETHING PRESSING: A Guide to Public Relations for the Video & Filmmaker

\$20.00

MEDIA ALLIANCE
c/o WNET
356 West 58th Street
New York, NY 10019
(212) 560-2919

An essential guidebook for filmmakers dealing with promotion. The book includes not only the address of every major newspaper, film magazine and critic, but gives tips on how to put together your own media package. A complete plan is outlined on conducting a successful press campaign.

If you're at all serious about promoting your film/video project this book is a must have for every independent filmmaker. I can't recommend it enough. Buy it now!



Famous X-TRAS

FAMOUS EXTRAS is the section where we interview extras from BIG films. I mean, c'mon, who wants to interview the egomaniacal director. He'll just blab on and on about his cinema, or his art. YUCK! WHO CARES! We want the real story. The only way to get that is to talk to the little people. If you've got a story, let's tell the world. So c'mon all you gaffers, set designers and Man #1s, drop us a line on how to get in touch with you.

A special guest joins us this issue for FAMOUS EXTRAS. Jim Backus, a legend to many and loved by millions. He is known to us in a variety of characters: the voice of the bumbling, wacky cartoon character, Mr. Magoo, the wealthy stockbroker Mr. Howell on *Gilligan's Island*, and many more. Jim Backus takes the center seat to give us his experience of working with James Dean. His personal recollections, their intense working relationship on *Rebel Without A Cause*, Dean's true ambition, and the unforgettable night when Jim and Henny Backus heard the news of the horrible accident on the car radio. Read for yourself a legend's remembrance of another legend.



With the release of *East of Eden*, the country was swept by a new overnight sensation—the late James Dean. After his second picture, *Rebel Without A Cause*, in which I played his father, his popularity became even greater. I know, because I have literally received thousands of letters, mainly from teenagers, and they are still coming in by the sackful.

These are usually three or four pages long. They are actually quite literate, and because they feel I was his "father", they pour out their hearts to me. They want to know everything about him . . . what he said . . . how we got along . . . and what he was like. Every single writer asks me to send something that belonged to Jimmy or that he even touched. They even beg for articles of clothing that I had worn in scenes with him, against which he might have brushed.

When the mail first started to arrive with all these strange requests, I complied and, for example, sent one fan club four pages from a scene Jimmy and I had done together, with scribbled notations in his handwriting. This, in a way, was a mistake, as it started an avalanche of more requests—each one more pathetic than the other. Many of the writers tell me that they have erected shrines in his memory. Others say that they are going to manage somehow to get to Hollywood and visit his grave. The pilgrimage idea got so overwhelming that the studio asked the newspapers to run a story informing his fans that Jimmy is not buried in Hollywood. He is buried in his hometown of Fairmount, Indiana. Now I am equipped to handle a normal amount of fan mail, but when this deluge started I became desperate and called Joe Halpern, who handled the studio's publicity on the picture, and told him my situation. He said he couldn't help me and that I was not alone, as other members of the cast were being snowed under, too. He told me that the studio was receiving literally roomfuls and roomfuls of fan mail, and that Warner Bros. was in relatively the same position.

Day by day, Jimmy's popularity kept mounting. Without question he became most in demand by the fan magazines. Dozens of articles were being written about him. The director of *Rebel Without a Cause*, Nick Ray, has completed a biography of Jimmy Dean called *Rebel*. France is very "Dean conscious," and it's *Cahier du Cinema* wants to reprint most of Ray's book. There were several other books on Dean in preparation. And rumors had the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences trying to give him a posthumous Oscar. This is pretty remarkable when you consider that Jimmy was only twenty-four years old and had had only two pictures released. The Jimmy Dean worship by the teenagers is still a topic of conversation in Hollywood. The "professionally analyzed" set explains it as utter self-identification—a rejection of the father image and the projection of a bewildered generation seeking a symbol. They may have something there, but I think it can best be described in two words—great talent! I first met James Dean on Thanksgiving night of 1954 before *East of Eden* had been released, and frankly at that time I'd never heard of him. Since Henny was out to town, Sharley and Keenan Wynn, knowing I would be alone, asked me to come to their house and share their turkey. They explained that they were inviting a few other lonely bachelors. The bachelors included Rod Steiger, Ralph Meeker, Arthur Loew, Jr., and a rather small young man who didn't look a day over eighteen. He was dressed in a navy blue suit that looked like he had worn it to his Confirmation, plus a black shirt, black boots with buckles, and a pair of oversized horned-rimmed glasses. I felt sorry for this strange kid because he seemed ill at ease. As it always is with actors, the conversation was mainly about show business,

Jimmy insisted on utter realism. And looking back, I sometimes wonder how we finished so violent a picture without someone getting seriously injured.

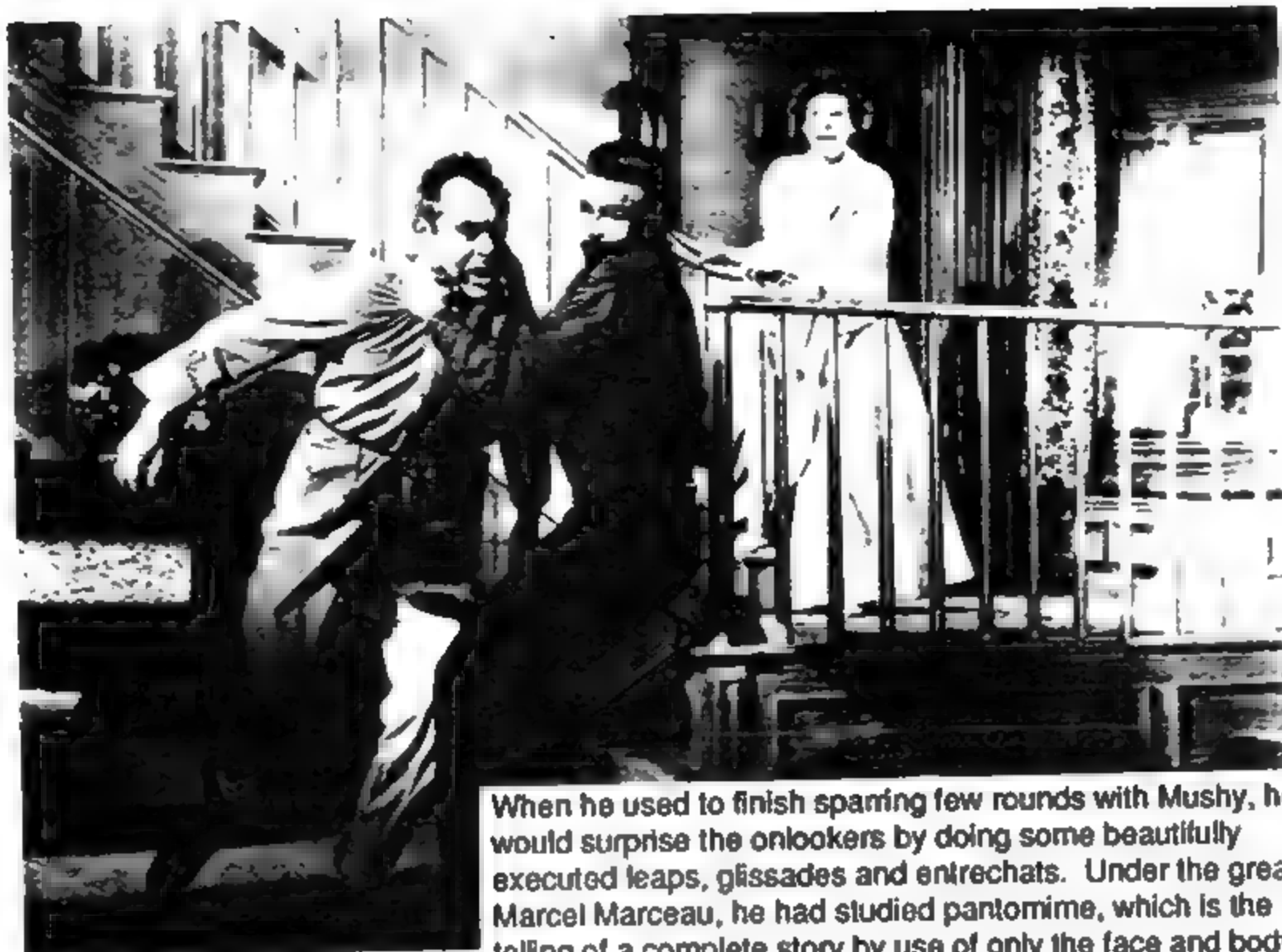
which he never entered into. The only time he he spoke up was when, as it often does at the Wynn's, the talk turned to racing cars and motorcycles. After the other guests had departed, I lingered on and remember saying to Keenan, "It was sweet of you and Sharley to have all of us lost souls over for dinner, but don't you think that that kid who works in a garage was uncomfortable with all of us hams?" "Works in a garage? Are you kidding?" said Keenan. "Sharley and I saw a preview of that new picture *East of Eden*, and that kid you called a garage mechanic is so brilliant in it, he tore the theatre apart." I remember tolerantly thinking on the way home, what a character that Keenan is. As far as he's concerned, anyone who rides a motorcycle can do no wrong.

Four months later, I was signed to play the "garage mechanic's" father. Before we started the actual shooting of *Rebel Without a Cause*, Nick Ray got Jimmy and me together and we spent a lot of time discussing the relationship between the father and son and analyzed the motivation of each scene, rather than simply going over the dialogue. We studied the entire script in continuity instead of the usual movie practice of learning isolated scenes as they come up in the shooting schedule. The picture was shot that way, too... from the beginning to the end in sequence wherever it was economically possible.

James Dean worked very closely with Nick. May I say that this is the first time in the history of motion pictures that a twenty-four-year-old boy, with only one movie to his credit was practically the co-director. Jimmy insisted on utter realism. And looking back, I sometimes wonder how we finished so violent a picture without someone getting seriously injured. For example, in one scene where Jimmy and another young man had a fight with switch-blade knives, the knives were the real McCoy. And this is one of the few films where doubles were never used.

A great many people, including members of our craft, feel that Jimmy had some sort of secret weapon or magic formula. I do not go along with this. I know that if anyone was ever dedicated to the art of acting, it was Jimmy. He had the greatest power of concentration I have ever encountered. He prepared himself so well in advance for any scene he was playing, that the lines were not simply something he had memorized—they were actually a very real part of him. Before the take of any scene, he would go off by himself for five or ten minutes and think about what he had to do, to the exclu-

"STAND UP!" Dean yells at movie dad Jim Backus.



sion of everything else. He returned when he felt he was enough in character to shoot the scenes.

On the stage, an actor has a chance to build and sustain a character, and through his evening performance, to finally reach a climax. Unfortunately, this cannot be done in motion pictures, and many times you have to plunge "cold" into a highly emotional scene. When this was the case, Jimmy would key himself up by vigorously jumping up and down a fifty foot ladder that ran to the top of the sound stage one scene in *Rebel* he was brought into Juvenile Hall on a charge of drunk and disorderly conduct. The scene called for him to have an intensely drawing argument with the officer in charge, and end up by hysterically banging on the desk in frustration and rage. Before the actual filming of the scene, he kept the cast and crew waiting for one whole hour. Keeping an entire company waiting for an hour sent the production department into a panic. I overheard one old crew member say, "What the hell does he think he's doing? Even Garbo never got away with that."

Jimmy spent the hour preparing for his scene, sitting in his darkened dressing room with a record player blasting out the Ride of the Valkyries, and drinking a quart of cheap red wine. When he felt ready, he stormed out, strode onto the set, did the scene, which was practically a seven-minute monologue. In one take, so brilliantly that even the hard-boiled crew cheered and applauded. He played that scene so intensely that he broke two small bones in his hand when he beat on the desk, which he practically demolished. Actually, he saved the production department money with his method of making them wait while preparing himself for his one-take perfection. As a matter of fact, on the average "A" picture, seven minutes of film is considered a pretty fine full day's work.

During the shooting of *Rebel*, Mushy Callahan, the former fighter acted as technical adviser on the fight scenes, and also worked as Jimmy's trainer. Mushy told me that Dean was a natural, and if he'd wanted to, he could have become boxing champion of his weight. Boxing was only one of the many things this remarkable kid did well. He had studied ballet and modern dancing, and was no slouch at either.

When he used to finish sparring few rounds with Mushy, he would surprise the onlookers by doing some beautifully executed leaps, glissades and entrechats. Under the great Marcel Marceau, he had studied pantomime, which is the telling of a complete story by use of only the face and body. And as a result, he had the greatest control over his body of any actor I have ever known.

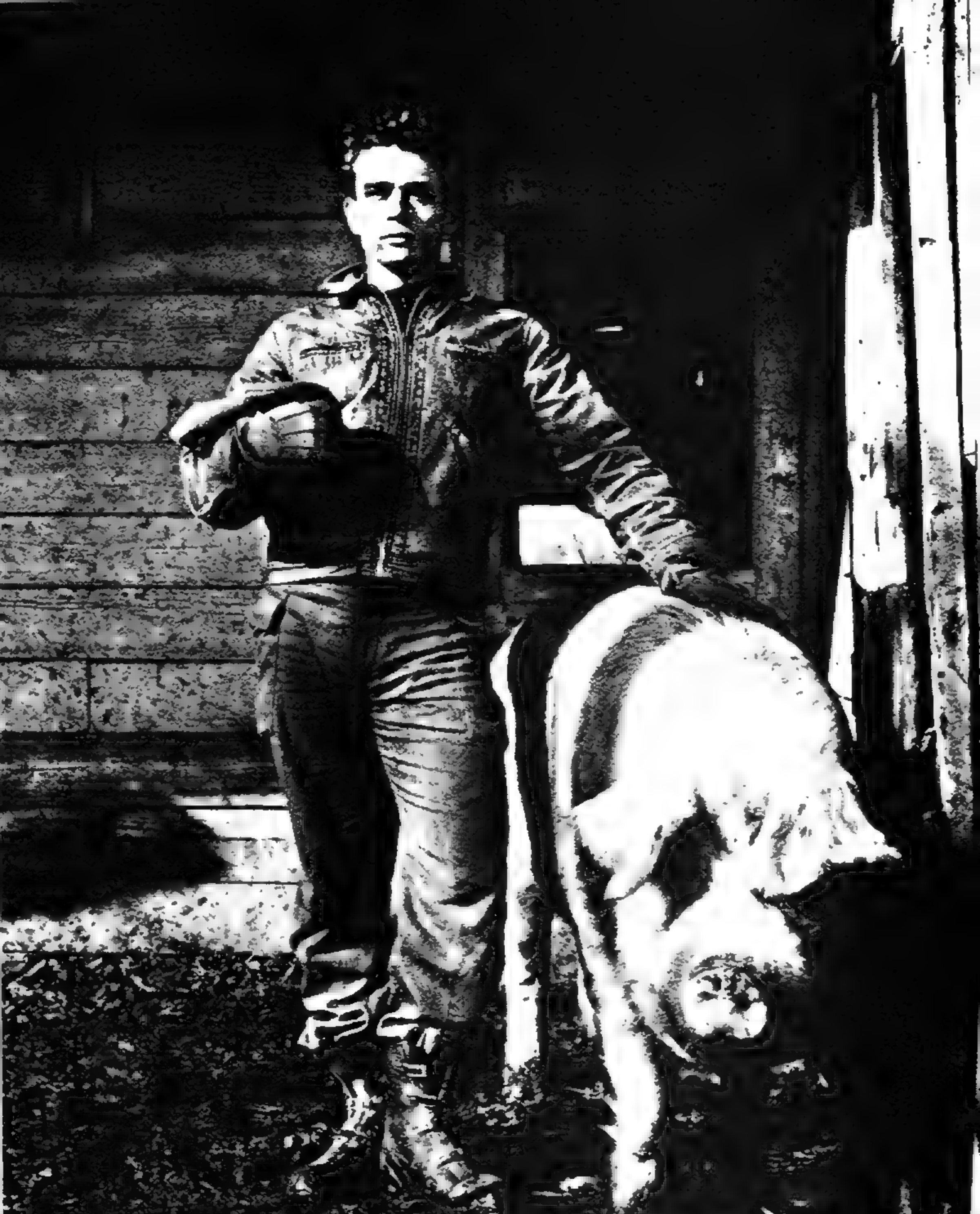
The crucial scene in *Rebel* was where Jimmy and I had a terrible argument at the top of a staircase, at the climax of which he threw me down the flight of stairs, across the living room, into a chair which went over backward, and tried to choke me to death. There is only one way to do such a scene. I had to remain completely passive and put my trust in Jimmy. If I, for any reason, got tense, we both could have been severely injured or even possibly killed.

I was two hundred pounds of dead weight, and this boy, who could not have weighed more than 140 pounds, tossed, carried, dragged and lifted me down those stairs, across the room and into the chair over and over again all day long, while they shot their many angles.

Due to the tremendous intensity with which Jimmy Dean approached his work, people got the impression that he was rude, ill-tempered and surly. At first, I must admit, I felt the same way. After I got to know him, I realized that he was very shy, although essentially a very warm person. I was one of the few people who knew what his real ambition was. He secretly wanted to be a baggy pants comedian and was quietly working on a nightclub act. Believe me, he would have "killed" the people.

I never will forget the night when Henny and I were driving along in the car, listening to the radio, and the shock with which we heard the news flash of his untimely death. We still can't believe that the vital, talented James Dean is gone. The entertainment world has lost the greatest young actor of our time, and I have lost a friend.

Reprinted with permission from . . . Only When I Laugh by Henny and Jim Backus © 1955.



Contrary to popular belief - this is NOT the man behind Jimmy Dean Brand Sausages

JAMES DEAN'S HOMETOWN

PHOTOS BY
TIM CALDWELL

WRITTEN BY
CHRIS GORE

FILM THREAT'S
PUBLISHER TAKES A
ROADTRIP TO
FAIRMOUNT, INDIANA
WITH TIM CALDWELL
AND HIS GIRLFRIEND
JULIE.

OPPOSITE PAGE
CONTRARY TO
POPULAR BELIEF THIS
IS NOT THE MAN
BEHIND
JIMMY DEAN BRAND
SAUSAGES.

FAIRMOUNT
HOME TOWN OF
• JAMES BYRON DEAN
• "GARFIELD" JIM DAVIS
• "CBS" PHIL JONES
FAIRMOUNT HISTORICAL MUSEUM
203 E. WASHINGTON STREET



Fairmount, Indiana is the hometown of James Byron Dean. Museum Days (also known as James Dean Days) is a three day long celebration the last weekend of September to coincide with the anniversary of his death. 20,000 people converge on the city to watch all three James Dean films, purchase souvenirs, and race cars in the James Dean Hot Rod Memorial Run. My friend Tim Caldwell, his girlfriend at the time, Julie, and this wacky writer embarked on a fascinating journey to explore this tourist hotspot. Our pilgrimage may well become a required rite for reaching manhood.

THE ROADTRIP

7:23 A.M.

We leave the city of Detroit. There's nothing I'll miss. We tremble in anticipation at the thought of seeing the last remnants of what was the greatest actor of the fifties and perhaps all time.



ORAN FELTON OWNS THE ONLY GAS STATION-DELI-VIDEO STORE IN TOWN. WHY NO DEAN FILMS IN THE VIDEO LIBRARY? "CAUSE THEY SEEN 'EM ALL, NOBODY WANTS 'EM."

7:33 A.M.

We exit at Eureka road because Julie is hungry. Tim wants donuts and Julie wants the sausage biscuits at McDonald's. We've been on the road ten minutes and we're stopping to eat. We narrowly avoid an accident due to construction.

8:05 A.M.

We eat McDonald's. My breath, my hands, my whole person reeks of a McDonald's smell. Not a sausage biscuit, or hashbrowns, or pancakes, but a clearly identifiable, rank, generic odor. Why is that? I already anticipate a dump. I heard that McDonald's puts papaya in their food as a natural pre-



THE FIVE & DIME CARRIES POSTCARDS, THE GIFT SHOP HAS T-SHIRTS AND THE FAIRMOUNT STATE BANK SELLS POSTERS.

servative. Papaya also happens to be a natural laxative. You didn't think fast food got its name just because it was served in a hurry?

9:29 A.M.

Somehow Julie gets the wrong directions from some friendly old men. I think they just wanted to check her out. Instead of taking the Ohio Turnpike we decide to take I-69. A much more scenic route that takes us through the backwoods of Indiana. I highly recommend not taking the Ohio Turnpike. When you stop at the toll booth you get this ticket that shows the time you left. When you get to the toll booth at the end they can tell if you were speeding, so you get another ticket. The rest stops on the highway are all owned and operated by the Ohio Turnpike which explains why they have those fly infested bathrooms that always boast of a pungent pee aroma. The only restaurants along the way are fast food (owned by who else?—the Turnpike) and Duff's. Duff's is an all you-can-eat place that's quickly becoming the new word for puke (ex. excuse me I feel like I'm gonna duff)

12:20 P.M.

We are now about five miles outside of Fairmount. We roll down the windows and it smells like a small town. Not because of the presence of fresh air, but because of the absence of pollutants. We see the third dead

raccoon of the trip, it looks like a cute teddy bear that someone abandoned.

12:30 P.M.

Entering the city, we stop at the first gas station. The only gas station. I get directions to the museum from the friendly owner of the gas station/deli/video store, Oran Felton. I ask Oran, "How many people do you get per week comin' through to see his grave?"

"Bout 10 or 12," he responds in a friendly country, backwoods dialect. My questioning is cut short by a slurpee sale "Not right now I'm a little busy."

The video library here has everything from *Gandhi* to *Full Metal Jacket* but no James Dean movies. "Why no Dean films," I ask.

"Cause they seen 'em all nobody wants 'em." Oran is used to this and can spot an outsider immediately. He gives us directions to the museum in the heart of town and I try to get used to the down-to-earth politeness. I hear myself already developing this country accent.

12:55 P.M.

We stop at a garage sale on the way into town. Tim finds a super 8 camera and projector for \$50. I pass. I want Dean stuff. Julie finds some old army fatigues. I talk to an old woman, Ruth Jones who is listening to country

and western on her radio. "Did you ever meet him?" I ask politely.

"He was in my house!"

"What was he like?"

"He's just a kid is all I can tell you."

I press on with my questioning "Was he real obnoxious?"

"No. He was a kid. I don't ever remember him ever doing anything bad. His grandparents lived right across the street from me. I always thought he was alright and then all these stories came out about him and I couldn't believe it."

"He turned kind of wild when he went to the city?"

"Well, he wasn't that way here."

1:19 P.M.

I waltz into the Bureau of Motor Vehicles Fairmount Office #540 and ask the lady behind the desk, "Was he a bad driver?"

"I don't have any idea really, they purge their records after a certain number of years. Sorry I can't help you, but they throw away everything after five years."



KENNETH ANGER CALLED HIM "THE HUMAN ASHTRAY" AND YOU CAN BUY ONE AT THE MUSEUM GIFT SHOP.



THE ONLY RECORD STORE IN TOWN IS OPEN THREE DAYS A WEEK. DEAN ARTIFACTS LITTER THE WALLS.



I WALTZ INTO THE BUREAU OF MOTOR VEHICLES FAIRMOUNT OFFICE #048 AND ASK THE LADY BEHIND THE DESK, "WAS HE A BAD DRIVER?"

Interestingly, the Motor Vehicles office was formerly the world headquarters for the first James Dean Fan Club. Warner Brothers forwarded all the mail here and they had to move when they couldn't handle the barrage of letters.

1:27 P.M.

The only record store in town is open three days a week and the Helen Broyles, who runs the store, remembers Jimmy. "I came here in 1946, he left in '49 and I just remember him riding his motorcycle, black leather jacket—referred to as a hood."

"He was referred to as a hood? How did he gain this hood reputation?"

"Well people with black leather jackets and long hair in the back was kinda rare then." There are pictures on the wall of Morrissey shooting his music video on the street right in front of this store.

"Yeah, Morrissey was here. He did a video for his album here, he was here in February, 5 of 'em from London and then they picked up a crew from Indianapolis. He's a big fan of James Dean." We head for the museum

1:51 P.M.

The museum is closed but they leave several numbers to call. We browse around some of the local busi-

nesses. James Dean is everywhere. The drug store has postcards and notebooks with his face on it, the gift shop has t-shirts, and even the Fairmount State Bank sells posters. We stop at the pool hall that has a wall size mirror with his image reflecting back. I call the number for the museum and it is the home of one of the curators. The lady on the line is too nice for words, "I can be there in fifteen minutes, is that okay?"

"Fine," I say. I'm still startled by this amiable attitude. We grab a beer to pass the time and talk with some of the locals.

2:05 P.M.

Toni Poe, a truck driver standing by the pool table, offers a few good bits of dirt. "There's a story handed down to us by this elderly lady here in town. He had ridden his motorcycle into the church. He rode it through when they were havin' recession, right down the middle of the church and everything, got everybody upset."

After giving directions to the grave, Toni relays another shocking tidbit. "They steal the headstone constantly. It has been replaced 2 or 3 times at least. They found it at the dump the last time and somebody turned it in."

? P.M. We've lost track.

Stunned we are actually in the same town where Dean used to live.

We make it to the museum. Signing in the museum book I notice people from all over the world have made this pilgrimage; Australia, England, Denmark, Japan, Germany, and just the day before, 16 people from Paris, France.

"He was an athlete, musician, you name it, and he tried it," says elderly Mary Harvey, one of the museum's curators. Mary also informs us that Fairmount is the home of Jim "Garfield" Davis, the Wright brothers, Phil Davis from CBS.

"Why so many famous people from around here?"

"Must be somethin' in the water. I don't know. The first hamburger was made here."

"What do you think of this phenomenon?"

"I can't understand it. It's been 33 years and every year it gets bigger. I don't know, I really don't."

Items at the museum include his motorcycle, Kenneth Kendall artwork, statues, a life mask started by Dean himself, there is a replica of the crashed Porsche complete with blood, his favorite shirt, rare photos and posters I've never seen. Everything is authentic, Dean's father donated a lot of it. There is James Dean money, a \$55 dollar bill, a book of poetry sent in by people from all over the world. A recently donated painting has an anarchy symbol painted behind Dean in his classic rebel pose.

Mary goes on to say, "I graduated with his uncle, his name was Charles Nole Dean and he was tellin' me one day that he was out there at the time and Jimmy wanted him to go with him that day and he couldn't go, he had something else he had to do. So he said he'd often wondered if he had been with him, if the wreck would've happened or whether they'd both been dead. So that goes through his mind a lot of the time."

"Do you have any good trouble-maker stories?"

"Well not bad, but he was always a leader of somethin', he was a rebel y'know, he was gonna do it or else. The last time he was in Fairmount he had his picture done in a casket."

Harry and Ann Warr are the Fairmount historians who try to give me the real scoop. Harry starts to ramble, "Well y'know you say how was Jimmy Dean, was he a rebel? Not really. Jimmy Dean was a farmboy brought back here and raised by the Winslows after his mother passed away, went to Fairmount High and was into all kinds of athletics, sports, was an actor really, and of course he won the state award in speech, I'm sure it was kinda hard to move in and be an actor between livin' in New York and California, he stayed at it I know and finally the right man seen 'em. He was just a young guy like all of us and he got in there finally and had what we hate was a short career. Fairmount's proud of him I know."

Ann gives her explanation of his evergrowing popularity, "It's that rebel film, the kids identify with that rebel



SMILE! HERE POSES WRITER TIM CALDWELL AND HIS GIRLFRIEND, JULIE.



EVERYONE WANTS THEIR PICTURE TAKEN WITH THE HEADSTONE.

character. I don't care much for that film. I don't ever remeber him ever doing anything bad. He was different. He did it his way."

"Is it true he rode a motorcycle through a church?"

"I don't know about that but it could'a happened," replies Harry.

Ann interrupts, "Oh no, no. Not around here he didn't, not without us knowin' it."

Mary jumps in to set things straight, "A lot of things that have been written about him . . . a lot of it's not true and we're not happy with it either."

"What things are not true?" I inquire.

"Different things about—oh you know the boy—he didn't live long enough to do all the things that have been published about him in magazines and newspapers. There's no way. He's more famous now since he died."

Tim and Julie keep giving me the eye, telling me "We want to leave!" I buy a whole bunch of stuff I really want but don't really need. I waste money on a James dean mug, an ashtray, two t-shirts, an authentic placemat, postcards, a clock, a pencil, and more pointless junk.

5:49 P.M.

We head for our last stop, the grave. There is a beaten path to the headstone. It rests in the middle of the graveyard, just off the dirt road. Flowers still surround it. The air is still. Tim and Julie ask me to take a few romantic photos of them by the headstone. The camera is not drunkproof, however, and I have to do manual things like focus and set the exposure (luckily, the pictures turned out). After our photo session we hop in the car nonstop for home.

7:10 P.M. Leaving

The drive back is exhausting as the temperature throughout the day lingered in the 90s. We don't feel it until now. The familiar industrial stench of Detroit returns about midnight when we get off I-75 onto Jefferson Avenue. A truck cuts us off, a car alarm blares and a man screams an insult from the jeep passing us. We're back.

**Fairmount Historical Museum
203 East Washington St.
Fairmount, IN 46928
PH #s (317) 948-5382 or
948-4776 or 948-5461**

Open Saturday and Sunday Noon to 4 P.M. or during the week by appointment only.

INTERVIEW WITH JAMES DEAN

*Questions I wish
I could ask him.*

by Chris Gore

Visiting the gravesite, blood rushes to various parts of my body. An arrangement of flowers on the grave carries the sign, "I love you, Jimmy." After all these years they keep coming, as am I. That is... about to come and do an interview. I ready my tape recorder for what might be the most important interview of my life. I hope to record any response that may be heard from this place. It could be him.

Settle a bet between me and a friend, will you? You made allusions that you might take your own life. Did you get in that fatal accident on purpose?

...

Did you and Martin Landau really have a relationship when you lived in New York?

..

You messed around with Vampira when you lived in California, she was incredibly obsessed with you. Now, if you were alive today, do you think you might go for someone like Elvira?

PHOTOS BY TIM CALDWELL



STANDING READY WITH A TAPE RECORDER
WAITING FOR ANY RESPONSE.



...

Have you talked to Vampira lately? She was known for trying to reach you from beyond.

...

Who do you think you might have married?

...

Why do you think you're so popular, now that you're dead?

...

Did you really have an S & M fetish or is that another in a long line of rumors created after you died?

...

Death has put a damper on many an actor's career but it only seems to have helped yours, had you lived, what actors or directors would you have wanted to work with?

...

Do you remember meeting Bill Nolan during a race in Palm Springs?

...

Doesn't ring a bell?

...

After being dumped by Pier Angeli you revved your motorcycle in front of the church when her and Vic Damone got married. C'mon, be honest. Do you really think it would've worked out between you two?

...

Any advice for starving young actors out there (besides don't speed in a Porsche)?

...

What do you think of Paul Newman getting all the parts you were signed for? Did you like the guy?

...

Do you like underground films?

...

Any message to the millions of fans out there?

...

Well, I'm out of questions, is there anything you'd like to add?

...

(No comment seems to be his only response.)

To be frank for a moment, I'd have to say this was the most boring interview I have ever done.



6 FEET AWAY FROM THE GREATEST ACTOR THAT EVER LIVED.



IN THE
**JAMES
DEAN
STORY"**

KIND OF NOCTURN

PRESENTED BY WA

September 30th, 1955, the boy was dead. James Byron Dean, the twenty-four year old star of Warner Brothers' *East Of Eden* (and the yet-to-be-released *Rebel Without A Cause* and *Giant*) had met career's end behind the wheel of his Porsche Spyder, crashing on desolate Route 466, near Cholame, California. Though he'd been a fixture of the Hollywood scene for little over two years, Dean had attracted a strong core following of teenage fans who sensed a kind of kinship with the magnetic new star, whose screen personality seemed to evoke the real anxieties of youth.

A veteran of stage and live TV, Dean had only recently found support from serious film critics who showed disdain for youth films; Dean's was a talent that could not be denied. However, the acclaimed young actor was now gone, leaving Warner with two unreleased features and no star to promote the product. Postmortem film releases were supposedly bad boxoffice; studio bosses found good reason to be concerned over their two-picture investment. How would the public react?

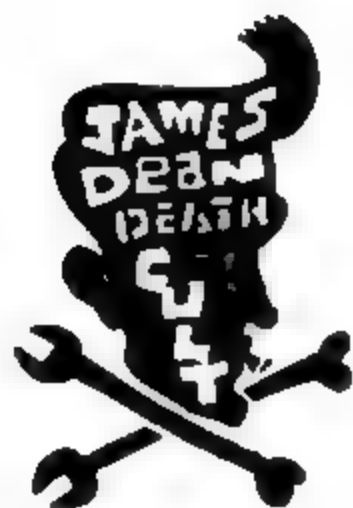
Any worries would have been in vain. Less than a month after Dean's fatal accident, *Rebel Without A Cause* opened in New York. The film that would showcase Dean's most identifiable role (as misunderstood teen Jim Stark) provided the impetus for a celebrity cult unlike anything before or since.

News of Dean's death that September had provided some unusual momentum for Warner Brothers; press stories about the tragedy furnished valuable free publicity for the studio's upcoming films. When *Rebel* opened, it drew both the devoted, and the merely curious, but the film was certainly no hollow success; the former Indiana farmboy showed a presence that was candid and remarkably captivating. By the time WB premiered *Giant* in late 1956, the Dean fans were a legion. A man who had been dead for over a year was now the subject of a massive promotional campaign; audiences attending the film for the first time were even met by eerie, life sized representations of the actor. It was as if he never went away.

Gossip-laden fan magazines, a favorite of many teenage filmgoers, were the primary moving force in building the Dean story into the status of a legend. Serving initially as a sounding board for the tributes of dedicated fans, such magazines as *Photoplay*, *Modern Screen*, and *Sixteen* soon graduated to dramatic "interpretive" features

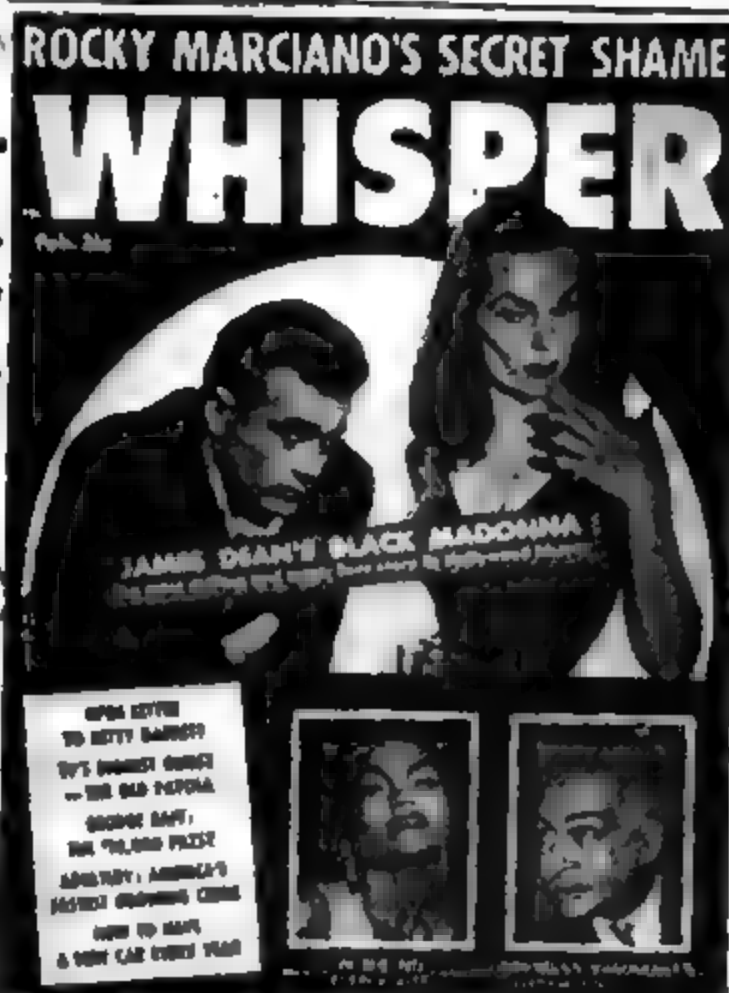


by Jim Thompson



and ghostwritten remembrances. There were literally scores of James Dean fan clubs with members across the country, and later, throughout the world. One of these was the generically titled "James Dean Fan Club". Interested fans could perpetuate "The Memory Of A Great Actor" by sending one dollar to a Hollywood address, expecting to receive in return a selection of items supposedly valued at \$5. Members were promised an 8 by 10 glossy portrait (suitable for framing!); four stills from *East of Eden*; four stills from *Rebel Without A Cause*; eight wallet-size photos; and a membership. Truly a bargain for a buck, but it should be noted that the same dollar could have bought four fan magazines loaded with photos of Jimmy. But could your pocketbook be the only measure of your devotion to James Dean? Someone seemed to think so; the flood of one-shot fan magazine tributes was startling.

For a while, it seemed as if the press was unaware of the extent of the young Dean cult. It wasn't until the spring of 1956 that stories began to appear in the newspapers, with headlines like "Jimmy Dean Still Gets Mail" and "They Won't Let Him Rest In Peace". In the following months articles in magazines like *Saturday Review* and *Newsweek* approached the phenomenon with a sort of sideshow



PIECES OF DEANOBLIA; A PLACEMAT FROM HIS HOMETOWN, A FAN MAGAZINE, A FOREIGN STAMP.

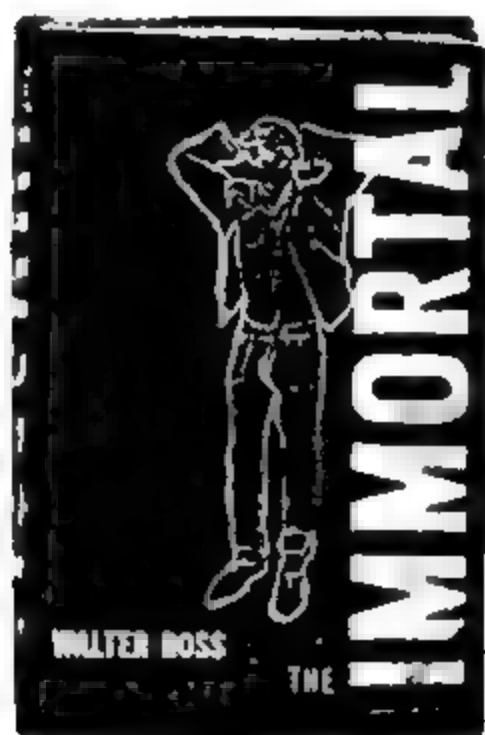
curiosity. However, the effects of the Dean cult were wide spread; even the relatively conservative *Look* magazine featured Jimmy a year after his death, signalling to the households of the adult establishment the strength of a peculiar, somewhat morbid youth movement. The cover of the magazine's October 16, 1956 issue featured Jimmy as Jett Rink; the headline read "JAMES DEAN: The story of the strangest legend since Valentino." No longer confined to the fan-mag underground, the Dean cult had now been officially recognized.

To most younger fans, the immediacy of Dean's death provided a shocking lesson in early mortality; the naive could only react with disbelief. Apart from

somewhat impersonal fan-mag forums, the teens who felt an emotional bond with Jimmy found new ways to exorcise their confusion and grief. Even the grassroots fan clubs could offer little direct solace; most were maintained through inefficient correspondence, their members too widespread to be truly unified.

As a result, scores of teens poured out their hearts in letters written to a dead man, sent to his most logical Earthly contact point—Warner Brothers. The numbers were amazing. April, 1956 alone brought the arrival of 5,000 fan letters, though the highest rate of mail would reach a peak of 7,000 letters per month. Eventually, the studio would receive more than 50,000 letters during the year that followed Dean's death. Even today, it is said, the letters still arrive.

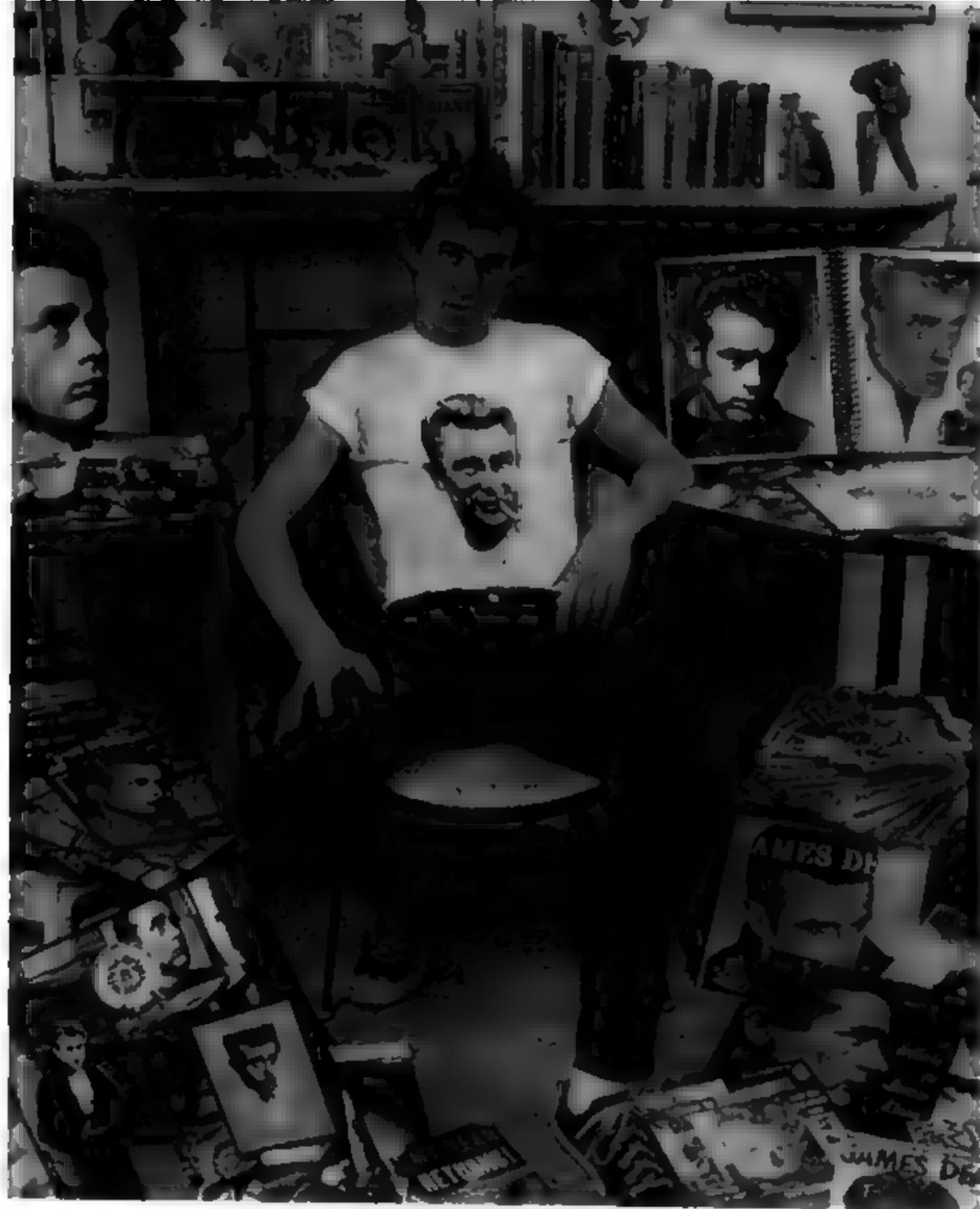
Many teens of the 50s—now in their fifties—still recall the dramatic rumors that followed the Cholame crash. These creative fantasies, sometimes originating in the fan magazines, carried enough hints of believability to ensnare a most gullible audience: the fans who did not want to believe that James Dean was dead. Stories were circulated in whispered tones throughout the country; Dean was still alive, walking the grey streets of New York in anonymity. Or was he disfigured and insane, living under guarded care in a secluded private home? Perhaps he had lived on with a surgically altered face and a new identity. Some thought he'd been reincarnated; others said they'd seen him as a pale fleeting ghost.



COVER ILLO BY ANDY WARHOL FOR THE IMMORTAL.



GERMAN FAN MAGAZINE. (1957)



DAVID LOEHR, A DEANOPHILE WHO OWNS THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF ORIGINAL DEAN MEMORABILIA (INCLUDING THE CLOTHES HE WORE IN EAST OF EDEN) IS MOVING IT ALL BACK TO FAIRMOUNT.

The James Dean Gallery, 425 N. Main St. Fairmount, IN 46928 (317) 948-3326. Open Wednesday through Sunday, noon to five p.m.

Though no one could really have been expected to believe these entertaining folktales, they did provide a glimmer of hope for fans who'd been shocked into uneasy disbelief. The "Dean Is Alive!" rumors were kept alive in the tabloids through the 1970s, a tradition only recently replaced by similar (but sillier) rumors about Elvis Presley. The Dean rumor cycle was even revived by no less than a personage than Johnny Carson, on a May, 1988 edition of *The Tonight Show*.

The massive emotional reaction to Dean's passing had been unlike anything since the death of Rudolph Valentino, more than two decades earlier. Dean's influence was much more significant—Valentino was more a "face" than an actor—but both stars represented the ideal of their respective generations. Both, of course, died young and at a career peak; each showed a quirky screen charisma better appreciated by

audiences than by film critics of the era. Intriguingly, both Dean and Valentino were part of Hollywood's bisexual underground, a fact eagerly overlooked by Tinseltown publicists who enjoyed fictionalizing their clients' private lives for the benefit of the press. Publicly accused of being "effeminate" during his career, Valentino ironically had a condom named after his best known character, the Sheik. But knowledge of Dean's S & M proclivities would never have been welcomed in the conservative America of the 1950s; gossip about the actor's recklessness and pre-hippie social habit provided enough controversy. Tolerated in public, but kept in check in the studio, Dean expressed a feeling of distance and alienation more subtly realistic than audiences could have realized at the time.

Many professional and amateur photographers cashed in nicely after Dean's Death. Fan-mag demand for photos—any



photos at all—was high, and reader requests for "new" pix helped bring to print many low quality snapshots and outtakes that might otherwise have been lost to the circular file. Captioned album-format pictorial collections, quickly assembled to capitalized upon the tragedy, were especially hot sellers on the newsstand. Some fans bought multiple copies of each "memorial" magazine release, cannibalizing one copy for photos to adorn their personal shrines to Dean.

The actor was physically absent, but his face was everywhere. In 1956 it was announced that Princeton University would showcase a mask of Dean alongside the likenesses of such notables as Beethoven, Thackeray, and Keats. Jimmy's visage even went into postmortem mass production, with the manufacture of painted rubber "Miracleflesh" masks of his unscarred face. One can only imagine the surreal jolt of a late-50s Halloween populated with ghostly James Deans making the Trick-Or-Treat rounds!

A variety of other ready-made and unconventional collectibles were made available to buying fans. Apart from the more typical fan magazines and film-related memorabilia were such other items as James Dean pocket knives, desktop busts, and Rebel-style jackets. Jimmy's brooding face also helped to sell sheet music, paperback books, and LP records (including *James Dean On Conga Drums*, a transcription of an afterhours improptu session). At least eight tribute songs turned up on 45 RPM singles, carrying such weighty titles as "The Ballad Of James Dean", "The Story Of James Dean", and "Hymn For James Dean".

Souvenir rings were even reported to have appeared on the market, each advertised as supposedly holding an illicit chip from Jimmy's gravestone. Dean fans, unable to make literal contact with the actor during his lifetime, now had to scavenge for pieces of Jimmy-by-proxy. While most were satisfied with the commercially produced mementoes, other were obsessed with acquiring relics that had been directly linked with the young actor—material goods that



had (in the mind of the cultist) gained powerful significance in being associated with Dean.

Nick Adams, the young actor who dubbed part of Dean's dialogue in *Glant*, told interviewers how the death of his friend had affected his own life. "(The fans) ask for anything Jimmy had, anything he came in contact with," Adams marveled. "They say, send me anything Jimmy touched. If he touched the wall, send me a piece of the wallpaper."

This fanaticism was very real, and in some cases, very frightening. A number of Dean's personal belongings were stolen from his apartment almost immediately after his death had been reported. Adams told of one girl who had been arrested after trying to steal Dean's scrapbook from his house. He asked for police protection after she returned



FOREIGN POSTERS FOR REBEL AND GIANT.



to decorate his front door with a disfigured voodoo doll and other not-so-cryptic signs of threat. As bizarre as this incident may have been, this deadly devotion was not unique; there were also reports of another female fan who had attempted suicide because of her desire to "join Jimmy in death."

Tragedies of this sort were thankfully rare; as the publishers and souvenir vendors had shown, this odd necrophilic adulation could be channeled into very rewarding payoffs. Auto maven George Barris purchased for \$2500 the battered wreck of Dean's Porsche Spyder, stripping the metal cadaver of its remaining valuable parts, which were in turn resold to other racing drivers.

In December of 1956, the Porsche wreck appeared in Hollywood at the International Motor Sports Show, accompanied by a sign warning of the dangers of wreckless driving. The macabre exhibit was adopted by the California Highway patrol, soon appearing through the Golden State. Their logic was strange but clear: If gorey highway safety films don't

scare the shit out of young drivers, then James Dean's death car will do the deed. However, the actual effect of the display was somewhat different; visiting teenagers surreptitiously picked away at the thin aluminum skin of the Porsche, keeping the metal fragments as a very unique souvenir. A personal audience with the infamous car would be the closest most fans would ever be with the physical entity of Jimmy Dean.

According to Warren Newton Beath's *The Death Of James Dean*, the Porsche was supposedly linked with further tragedy after its purchase by Barris. Two drivers whose cars held parts taken from the Dean car were involved in racing accidents; one of the drivers was killed. The wreck itself, Barris claimed, was involved in a series of strange incidents during its tour, including three accidents caused by the car while in tow. A fire in a Fresno storage garage damaged the car in 1959; later, the wreck would fall apart—twice—while being displayed. Considering the nature of the accident, this might not seem unusual, except for the fact that Barris had welded the car together three years earlier! While supposedly in transit from Florida, the Spyder wreck apparently disappeared in 1960. It is not known whether Barris collected on insurance for his loss, but it is certain that he exploited the Porsche with a macabre brazeness that its former owner may have appreciated.

The death-cult aspects of Dean fandom were largely rooted in fantasy and imitation. During Dean's early years in Hollywood, the press (always obsessed with labels) had initially plagued Jimmy with comparisons to Marlon Brando, but these similarities soon proved to be superficial and brief. Unlike Brando, his reluctant idol, Dean conveyed an image malleable to his fans, the youths who felt they could rely upon the actor/character as an elder friend and advisor. Many teens saw themselves represented in the chaos and repression shared by Dean's screen characters; other fans sought to develop identity by styling themselves after his portrayal of "Jim Stark" in *Rebel Without A Cause*. Unlike the Elvis impersonators of today, these "phantom rebels" had more supernatural motives in mind; by dressing like Dean, they hoped to keep his spirit vital while trying to assume for themselves the same kind of respect they'd shown him. The phantom rebels were especially prolific during the few years following Dean's accident; one such rebel was named Charlie Starkweather.

Born to a poverty-stricken Nebraska family, Charles Starkweather seemed to have no discernable future. Known in ridicule as "Little Red" because of

his diminutive height and crimson hair, Charlie worked as a Lincoln garbageman, often wishing he were someplace else. An avid comic book fan, Charlie preferred fantasy to the depressing existence he'd come to know and (grudgingly) endure. Like most other teens at the time, the 17-year-old was a reverent James Dean fan, but to Charlie the actor was a hero; a young man who could triumph in the end because he was different from the rest. Just like in the comics.

Charlie began to dress like Dean's Jim Stark. This was not unusual in itself, but Starkweather's resemblance to the actor was fairly striking. In striving for the elusive quality of cool, Charlie was Dean reincarnated in the image of the heartland. Replete with tousled hick-punk hair, eyeglasses, and attitude, Charlie fit the bill—and went one step further.

On December 1, 1957, Charles Starkweather robbed a desert gas station, killing its attendant, Robert Colvert. Charlie then returned to Lincoln to the home of his young girlfriend, Caril Ann Fugate. Charlie shot and killed Caril's mother and stepfather, and choked Caril's two-year-old sister with the butt of the rifle. Leaving this carnage behind them, Charlie and Caril posted a note on the front door of the house warning



would-be visitors that the family had been hit by a flu bug. The two stayed around town for a couple of days, but the diversion didn't last long; Charlie and Caril fled town as the murders were discovered.

The young lovers began a bloody overland trip across state lines, murdering at least six more people along the way. "Little Red" didn't have to worry about ridicule any more; he was now a wanted fugitive, being pursued by a posse of twelve hundred—as well as the National Guard.

The end of the line was Douglas, Wyoming. After the pair's eleventh murder, a hostage grabbed Charlie's rifle; the scuffle lasted long enough for the police to arrive and eventually apprehend Starkweather. On June 24, 1959, Charlie died in the electric chair; five 2200 volt blasts took care of the



A TEDDY-BOY DEAN IMITATOR PIN-UP PHOTO.



job. Caril Ann was given life imprisonment, but was paroled in 1977. At last report she was said to have been working in western Michigan under a new identity given to her by the state.

If conceived in filmic terms and embellished with a bit of imagination, Starkweather's exploits seem to suggest *White Heat* or an unromanticized *Bonnie & Clyde* somewhat more than any of the James Dean films. (Ironically, Charlie's story eventually reached the screen in 1974 as Terence Malick's *Badlands*.) Still, some of Charlie's court statements might have come from the lips of Jim Stark himself:

"If we'd been left alone, we wouldn't hurt nobody."

Considering the political climate at the time, it's a wonder that news of the Starkweather affair didn't force the whole of the Dean fandom to fall under closer scrutiny. After all, the religious aspects of the teen Dean cult were quite evident. While America was having delusions about Communism, the Dean cult had spread throughout the world—to England, France, Japan, and elsewhere abroad. The importance of this peacetime cultural export



MASS-MURDERER CHARLES STARKWEATHER HAD THAT DEAN LOOK.



CARIL AND CHARLIE. IN CHARLIE'S CONFESSION HE SAID, "The more I looked at people, the more I hated them because I knowed there wasn't any place for me with the kind of people I knowed. . . A bunch of God-damned sons of bitches looking for somebody to make fun of. . ."

was hardly overlooked. In the February, 1956 *Cahiers du Cinema*, Francois Truffaut interpreted Dean's graphic characterizations as "...pride and regret at feeling oneself 'outside' society, refusal and desire to become integrated and, finally, acceptance or refusal of the world as it is." Though accurate, these remarks were quite redundant; it was the teenage audience—ideally the American teenager—that understood Dean best, in a knowing, telepathic sense.

Even by the early 1960s, Dean's still-fresh cinematic allure certainly seemed truer than the manufactured facades of so many shallow "teen idols". Distanced only by the years, the kids of the day instinctively sensed Jimmy's honest, lingering appeal—even if they knew little about the actor himself.

At this time, the first-generation Dean fans were well into adulthood, but younger followers had always been attracted to the fold, bringing with them an insatiable curiosity about the enigmatic actor. As late as seven years after his death, James Dean

was a star whose youthful attraction was still strong enough to bolster fan-magazine circulation.

As a response to the inquiries of its teenage readers, *Dig* magazine promoted its August, 1962 edition as a "James Dean Memorial Issue". Two months earlier, the magazine had featured a few Dean photos; the reaction reportedly brought letters "...from teenagers all over the world, asking for more material on Jimmy." *Dig* reported that all Dean-related back issues sold out quickly as a result, indicating good potential profits for a tribute edition.

The main feature of the August issue, an essay entitled "The Miracle Of James Dean," is an interesting reminiscence told from a fan's point of view.

Written by *Dig* editor Janey Milstead, the article is vague on details about Jimmy himself, even as it helps to inflate the Dean legend. Milstead's sincerity must have been reassuring to her young readers:

"You're the ones who need to

understand you're not weird just because you happen to want something that sounds impossible to the people around you. You're perhaps the main reason I wish James Dean was still alive. You deserve the same kind of encouragement James Dean gave to people who were young seven years ago," Milstead opined.

Though it may not have been obvious in 1962, it would be only a few years until the essence of Dean's unspecified onscreen angst would be translated into a more articulate form of rebellion. The social injustices hinted at in Jimmy's films—and buffered by the complacency of the Eisenhower era—were to be confronted by another generation. During the 50s, certain writers and visual artists identified with the so-called Beat movement had adopted Dean as a sort of spiritual ally to the counterculture. A definite influence that would eventually inspire such works as Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* (1963). With the advent of the youth movement of the 1960s, Jimmy was credited again with providing the key archetype for the image of youth in revolt.

At this time, yet another Dean-obsessed fan from the Midwest would emerge into the public spotlight. Virtually following Jimmy's trail, Minnesotan fan Bobby Zimmerman had moved to New York City, constructing for himself a new, ambiguous persona—as had Dean—and resurfacing full-blown as visionary folksinger Bob Dylan. In David Dalton's *James Dean: American Icon*, Hikkala, a member of Dylan's first band, remembered the reverence Dylan shared for Dean's publicly-entombed independent spirit. "We used to go to see all the James Dean shows those couple of years after he died," the drummer recalled. "We'd go down to the newsstand and get all the magazines that had any articles on Dean. He was kind of our idol. This is one thing for sure, that Bob dug James Dean. We idolized him both as a person and an actor. We felt, including Bob, that his acting was actually himself. He wasn't just acting the roles he was in. The roles were him," Hikkala told Dalton.

Following the familiar pattern, Dylan developed an apparent interest in racing, perhaps plagued by the same speed-merchant demons that tempted Jimmy. Given these parallels—and a little superstition—it would seem that Dylan's near fatal 1966 motorcycle accident, coming at the peak of his career, was predictable enough.

The Dean influence had helped shape rock culture since the days of the real Elvis Presley, whose popularity provided a

nice antidote to post-Dean gloom for some fans. While Elvis faded and eventually decayed, Jimmy's spirit held fast, especially during the poorly-realized 50s nostalgia revival of the culturally decrepit early 1970s. Dean was then being used as a point of reference to establish hip credibility; everyone from the Eagles to David Essex released songs flaunting his name. Later, bands of the punk era would follow much the same procedure, though with an arguably better understanding of Dean's significance; any punk with a sense of historical perspective was certainly aware of James Dean's importance as the central prototype for his own image.

One of the most recent rock tributes to Dean was the video for the Morrissey song "Suedehead". Shot in Dean's hometown of Fairmount, Indiana almost exactly 25 years after Dennis Stock's famous *Life* magazine photo-essay, the short film is a surprisingly excellent tribute marred only by Morrissey's self-conscious poses. Still, the British singer's melancholy composition complements the visuals quite appropriately; it's a heartfelt piece of Deanophilia.

The 1980s have seen James Dean attain the sort of commercial canonization accorded such other celebrities as Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, and the like; hundreds of Dean buttons, postcards, and t-



shirts are common sights in gift shops everywhere. James Dean's face has been sold to a licensing company. The three Warner Brothers films are very popular video releases, drawing new generations of followers. Both Cholame and Fairmount (with its Museum Days tribute) have become the frequently-visited meccas of Dean fandom, and yes, some of the fan clubs still exist, celebrating the mystique of a young man whose life and death made him an inextricable part of American popular culture.

We Remember Dean International
PO Box 5025, Fullerton, CA 92635
(714) 871-9699
Sylvia Bongiovanni

James Dean Fan Club
St. John Terr.
Cincinnati, OH 45236
Greg Lardes



ON HIS LAST TRIP TO FAIRMOUNT, INDIANA DEAN INSISTED ON POSING FOR THIS PHOTO IN A COFFIN. "When they shut the lid it squashes your nose."



DEAN'S INFLUENCE

AN INTERVIEW BY TIM CALDWELL WITH...

WILLIAM F. NOLAN

If you've seen on television the now classic "Trilogy of Terror" starring Karen Black (the segment with the tiny african voodoo doll maniacally pursuing Ms. Black through her apartment) you've been exposed to one of Mr. Nolan's teleplays. William has authored forty books and sold over six hundred short stories. He was the recipient of the Mystery Writers of America Edgar Allen Poe award, he also wrote the screenplays for *Logan's Run* and *Burnt Offerings*. William met Dean briefly and wrote articles about him in the fifties.

Did you ever meet James Dean?

Probably for about two seconds in the pit. The first time I saw Dean was at Palm Springs, California in early 1955 when I went down to the races with Charles Beaumont. We had just purchased sports cars and were just getting into the sports car field. The first race I ever went to was the Palm Springs race and Dean was driving the Porsche speedster at that time. I had heard about him, I don't think I'd seen any of his films at that time, I'd read a lot about *East of Eden* and I didn't think much of the idea of some movie star out there in a white Porsche competing against the veterans. Even though I was new to the sport, I knew it took a lot to win. Well, he won the race that day, not only won his class, he won overall. There's always two ways to win, you win your class and you win overall and if you can do them both you can take home the whole cake. So I was impressed with him. I subsequently saw him race a faster Porsche, at the Santa Barbara Road Race a few months later. At that time I had a friend racing there and we were in the pit area, Dean had the pit next to my friend's and I noticed that he was smoking a tremendous amount of cigarettes, he looked nervous, but confident about what he could do. So my friend just said, "Bill Nolan, this is James Dean." We shook hands for a few seconds. I'm sure he never would've remembered if he were alive. There was nothing to it at the time. To say that I knew him at all, no I didn't know him but I did meet him. And I was impressed with his driving there too. He blew up the engine in that race trying to overtake the leader. He was running in the lead at the time. I thought he was a little over confident, he was pushing too hard and obviously over revved the car. But he was very skillful in the turns and the way he handled the machine and was beating cars that were more powerful than he was quite easily with his driving skill.

If you and Charles Beaumont had collaborated on a Twilight Zone script entitled, "The Speed Demon" starring James Dean, or an actor playing Dean, what would be the basic plot synopsis?

I actually wrote a script about Dean under the name of

DePompa. I wrote it for William Friedkin who did *The French Connection* and *The Boys in the Band*. Friedkin had just done a Sonny and Cher comedy and he wanted to get into drama so I came up

with a script called "*DePompa*" which was about a Dean type exactly that died down in the Gulf of Mexico under weird circumstances. He fell in love with a very weird older woman who was into the occult world. She seduced him and killed him down in the deserted theater near the gulfstream in a little village down there. We actually flew down to scout locations and then Friedkin went to New York and we both got involved in other projects and never made it. That was a fictionalized version of Dean. What I was trying to say was Dean was a very strange and bizarre character. He, in my mind, fitted into a script about a strange bizarre independent sort of freaked out young man who got involved with an older woman. I did write several articles for *Photoplay* called, "His Love Destroyed Him," his love being racing, in which I detailed the exact sequence of events leading up to the crash. I subsequently saw the car after they brought it back. There was a lot of non-



... he was the kind of person who, in a 24 hour day, he got 36 hours out of it.



They saw Turnupseed's black car pulling in and Wutherich said he yelled to Dean, "LOOK OUT!" and Dean smiled and said, "He sees me." And that was the last thing that Dean ever said. . .

chopped up for souvenirs and people payed money to get a little piece of it, I don't think that happened at all. As far as I know it did not go on tour, it was not shown under a curtain saying 'James Dean's Death Car 50 cents for a part.' I think that's total myth, I never saw anything like that in Los Angeles area. I was involved in Dean's career and did a lot of research and was emotionally involved in him as a racing car driver, as an actor and I loved his films. It was ironic, he was just going to play Billy the Kid just before he died and he would've made a wonderful Billy the Kid. The semi-neurotic personality that he had would've fit the role. As a matter of fact Paul Newman does sort-of a Dean imitation when you see that film *The Left-Handed Gun*. There's all kinds of ironies in Dean's life and career. Another Irony is he played Jett Rink as an older man with a mustache somewhere around the age that he would be right now, Dean would literally be Jett Rink. He sort of pre-played his own life, he died within weeks of making *Giant*. So here he was playing a man of about in his fifties somewhere, more or less portraying what he would have been and then dying before he could get there. He was into the full range of life, he was the kind of person who, in a 24 hour day, he got 36 hours out of it. Dean is obviously in the Pantheon with Humphrey Bogart and Marilyn Monroe.

Would you put him in a league with Jesus Christ maybe 2,000 years from now?

No, I wouldn't go that far but certainly in the league with legendary screen stars. •

sense written about this car, the Porsche Spyder, the little bastard, as he called it and had painted on the back of it. I saw the car about a week after the crash, it was not completely demolished at all, it was only the side and the front, the back was in pretty good shape. But it was light aluminum and of course, it probably did break every bone in Dean's body as one report had it. I also knew Rolf Wutherich who was riding with him and I talked to Wutherich about the accident and Wutherich said that he was in the car with Dean, they were coming down the road at a pretty good clip, he didn't remember how fast, he said something like 60, 70, something like that, it was twilight. They saw Turnupseed's black car pulling in and Wutherich said he yelled to Dean, "LOOK OUT!" and Dean smiled and said, "He sees me." And that was the last thing that Dean ever said was, "He sees me." So Dean obviously figured that Turnupseed was going to stop. He was turning into the road that Dean was already going down. I can't see any way that it was Dean's fault, except maybe he was speeding above the limit, outside of that I can't see it was anybody but Turnupseed's fault. He turned right into the direction of a speeding car from an access road and that's totally illegal. So Dean was not at fault in my estimation as a driver. Now he was going up to race that car, I think he would've done very well in that car. He was very good in much smaller powered Porsches and I think in the Spyder he would've done extremely well, it was one of the fastest cars in racing. He handled it beautifully and I think that all of this talk about him being a reckless speed demon and not caring about how he conducted himself on the road is all nonsense. The one area he really did respect and love was racing. He was anything but what they tried to make him to be, I think the accident was not his fault and Turnupseed deserves the full credit on that one. I saw the car after the accident, this business about it being



September 30, 1955. Dean rounds the corner, sees Turnupseed's car, brakes, narrowly misses. "Oooh, close call," says a cool Dean to his terrified passenger Rolf Wutherich. "Watch it! You could have killed us!" Rolf responds, annoyed at Dean's matter-of-fact way of handling the near-accident.

What if James Dean never died?

If that fateful day in Chalome, California never occurred? If he made it on his way to race in Salinas? The fact is his career would have continued full steam ahead. He was signed with Warner Brothers to star in eight feature films, two of which were already named, *The Left-Handed Gun*

and *Somebody Up There Likes Me*. Both of these films went on to be produced and starred Paul Newman in the Dean roles. Jimmy was working with friend Bill Bast on a script for a film in which he would star and direct. The film was *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Dean's favorite character theme, the psychotic individual, would be told literally.

He was already finding himself lost working under the Hollywood system. After his bad experience with director George Stevens on *Giant* he was finding out he could not do exactly what he wanted to do. It is likely he would have started his own production company like Marlon Brando. It is unlikely that he would become bored with it as Brando did.

SEPTEMBER 30 1955 NEVER HAPPENED

His personal life was another area where Dean excelled at gaining the center of attention. His broken romance with Pier Angeli, and rumors of her carrying his child were headlines of the fan magazines. Dean's love life was a constant source of amusement for the press as he continued

to date all the Hollywood starlets.

James Dean was in constant need of new challenges. His driving and obsessive personality would have taken the movies to new heights. Had he lived into the 80s one can only imagine the accomplishments such a man might undertake. One could imagine or just turn the page.

B Y C H R I S G O R E

A SPECIAL THANKS MUST BE GIVEN TO THE ARTISTS WHO WORKED PAINSTAKINGLY ON THE ARTWORK IN THIS SECTION. THE ELVIS AND DEAN PENCIL IS BY RICK RUBY. THE VAMPIRA AND DEAN IS BY CHRIS SWANBERG, WITH A NOTE AND A KISS BY ELLEN SAWYER. THE ALTERED PHOTOGRAPHS WERE DONE BY NONE OTHER THAN TIM CALDWELL.



JAMES DEAN

A LEGEND IN LIFE FINALLY MEETS DEATH A TRIBUTE TO AN INCREDIBLE MAN

by Chris Gore

The world was shocked this month with the news of the death of one of cinema's most creative geniuses. September 30th, 1988 saw an end to an era. James Byron Dean, dead at the age of 57, of as yet undetermined causes. He spent most of his life as an actor, devoted to the craft that would ultimately be his undoing. Also a writer and director whose inimitable style carved a place for those great not only in film, but history itself. He recently completed an appearance in *The Godfather III*, even while his health began to deteriorate. It is rumored he knew of his impending death and signed a contract with Paramount which stipulated that his scenes be shot first. Sacrificing for his craft, even in the end.

What made James Dean a cult figure? Obsessive love has plagued him his entire life. His personal pain, became the pain of the millions of fans throughout

OPPOSITE PAGE: An unfinished pencil sketch done just weeks before Dean died by personal secretary Rick Ruby.

the world. It's the Horatio Alger quality of the Dean saga that attracts so many people, the rags to riches story of the young farmboy from Fairmount, Indiana who made it in the movies.

Born February 8, 1931. He was raised by his aunt and uncle, the Winslows, after his mother died of cancer when he was only nine years old. He graduated from Fairmount High School and won the Indiana State award

in speech. He came to New York after leaving U.C.L.A. in his Sophomore year. He had played some roles on Broadway stage and on early television. In 1954 he was chosen as "the most promising young star of the year" for his role as the Arab boy in Gide's *The Immoralist*. He joined New York's Actor's Studio and was introduced to "the method". Director Elia Kazan noticed the young actor and Dean was on his way to California to star in his first film.

Dean rose to stardom in Elia Kazan's film of the John Steinbeck book, *East of Eden*. He surprised the public and critics alike with his captivating portrayal of Cal. This newcomer had not only aroused the public but received an Academy Award nomination for his first role. He was an overnight sensation.

Nicholas Ray cast him in *Rebel Without A Cause* the film that shook the world. "Jimmy's real calling is directing," commented Ray the night of the premiere. The Rebel sensation had swept the hearts of teens of the world. Dean



The familiar Rebel pose from the fifties.
James Byron Dean
1931-1988



Dean with Elizabeth Taylor in *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* (1958). His first Academy Award winning performance and their last film together.

could not walk anywhere without creating a mob scene. In California the San Pedro police had him arrested for allegedly causing a riot at an ice cream stand when teens destroyed it after his supposed coaxing.

"The only friends I made on this picture were Liz and Rock, I didn't much care for anyone else." Although Dean was again nominated for an Oscar, *Giant* would prove to be a disappointing experience. *Giant* left an embittered Dean who swore to director George Stevens, "I can't be a good prostitute like you want me to."

The Left-Handed Gun and *Somebody Up There Likes Me* would be the last films Dean would make for Warner Brothers. The legal battle raged for years with Dean citing creative differences as his reason for leaving. Others say it was flame Pier Angeli who convinced Dean to walk away from his contract and elope with her.

In fall of '57 Dean broke the hearts of women all over the world. Not only did he marry Pier, he announced she was pregnant a month after the honeymoon. It seemed the press was intent on hating Pier Angeli as accusations of Pier's lesbianism were leaked by innuendo via the gossip columns.

After Dean completed acting in another film, Pier gave birth to twins. A boy and a girl, Julian and Jillian came into the world on September 5th, 1958. The Dean twins were immediately the darlings of the press. It was a banner year for the Deans in personal triumphs. Finally, after three Academy award nominations James Dean would receive his first Oscar. *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* propelled Dean into that much respected class of actors. His compelling performance with Elizabeth Taylor in *Giant* and *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*, made them, in the words of more than one critic, "... the movie screen's most beautiful couple." His professional respect for her off screen did nothing to keep

the tabloids from linking them romantically. Constant headlines appeared in the fan magazines suggesting his leaving Pier for Liz, but with his love of the twins, Dean was a devoted father. Elizabeth Taylor committed suicide on a cold Christmas day in 1959. She left nothing but a letter (the exact contents of which have never been revealed) that expressed her contempt for James having rejected her. Evidence suggests that Ms. Taylor never actually intended to kill herself. The drugs and alcohol in her body were not enough. It was the 24 karat gold jewelry box that she collapsed on that ended her life. The jewelry box, valued at \$75,000, pierced her abdomen, resulting in a slow and painful death. An ironic instrument, it was a gift from former husband Mike Todd. Dean expressed his regret at the loss, "I loved her like a sister, I know Pier feels as sorry as I do."

After finally getting out of his contract with Warner Brothers, supposedly to produce his own films, he did a favor for a friend. James starred opposite Marlon Brando in *Burst Of Vermilion*. Brando directed the 1960 western that enjoyed mild success at the box office. However, conflicts on the set ensured Brando his first and only directorial effort. Dean was getting ready for the director's chair himself and he wished to work with who he considered to be one of his acting heroes. That feeling would change drastically on the set as the two slung mud through the gossip columns. Dean said of Brando, "When Porky isn't



James overshadows his former hero as he and Marlon Brando star in *Burst Of Vermilion* (1960). The film was literally a knockout.

munching on a woman's breast he's munching on a chicken's breast." Brando's retort, "I don't hate James, it's his carpet munching wife that gets on my nerves." Some said Dean aggravated the situation on purpose to increase the tension of the performance between the two characters. Other critics maintain it was a hoax, concocted by the film's publicist. The fact remains that Dean and Brando launched into a full-fledged fist fight that halted production for two weeks while Brando's swelled jaw healed. "The best acting will never be seen at the theater. James and Marlon's petty arguments should have been on camera because they reached emotional climaxes the silver screen has yet to see," commented one Hollywood critic invited on the set. After filming was completed James Dean and Marlon Brando never worked together again.

In 1961 the Academy would acknowledge Dean's talent for more than just an actor. *Dark Side of the Mirror*, the story of a psychotic heroin addict as a modern day retelling of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, was James' pride and joy. *Dark Side of the Mirror* swept the Oscars with eight nominations, winning five for best direction, best actor, best screenplay, best supporting actress for newcomer Piper Laurie, and of course, best picture. Having just won first place at a race in Palm Springs the day of the awards, he rushed to the event still carrying his racing trophy. In his acceptance speech to the Academy he mused, "I don't know which one I'm more proud of." His incredible performance as Eddie Felson in *The Hustler* went virtually ignored in comparison to *Dark Side*. "It was just another great Dean performance," commented one New York Times critic.

James made an incredible three films a year after *Dark Side of the*



Dean wins three Oscars for Dark Side of the Mirror. "I don't know which one I'm more proud of," mused a beaming Dean the night of the 1961 Academy Awards. Earlier in the day he cleaned up at the races in Palm Springs. "

Mirror and became perhaps as powerful as the studios themselves. *The Stand-Up* (1962) was the only film that received poor reviews. "I've always wanted to try stand-up comedy, I think I'll stick to making films." *Greed*, the remake of the Erich Von Stroheim classic, met with mixed reviews, however it won Dean another Oscar for actor.

Dean met producer Ed Wood, Jr. at a swank Hollywood party in 1963 and found they both shared the same twisted vision. They agreed to make a films together which resulted in *The Horror of the Creature* and *Vampire A Go Go* starring his old flame Vampira. A decision he would later regret. Dean

took a beating from the critics but they remain his most lucrative films from the early sixties. Even *Dark Side of the Mirror* didn't make as much money as *Brainsuckers from Hell*. "Making these movies for Ed is fun. They only take a month to shoot and well if the critics don't understand the sense of humor, they can f— off." Dean's attack on the critics was not taken lightly but one critic, Francois Truffaut, understood his logic. "The diagetic semiotics of the horror genre is only a metaphorical link for Mr. Dean's oeuvre and the political systems he reveres. I'm thoroughly aroused," Truffaut commented in a review of all three horror films.



James finally married Pier Angeli in 1957 and soon after came the Dean twins. The twins became the darlings of the press and pictured here are the happy parents showing them off in a crowded Central Park in fall of 1959.

Marital problems with Pier led to a short separation after rumors flew about a relationship with Piper Laurie. On that note Dean had this to say, "Pier means more to me than life itself, more than my films. If she asked me to give it up today I would, but she knows how much it makes me and the twins happy." James often brought the twins on the set of his films. Ed Wood, Jr. became attached to them and was often the Dean babysitter. "They call me Uncle Woody. I'm going to make a film about two kids from outer space starring the twins. Jimmy doesn't know it yet but he's directing." Ed leaked this bit of information to the gossip col-

umns. The Dean family was referred to as the "Happy Deans" (that is where the slang term *Happy Dean* comes from). The twins were constantly surrounded by paparazzi and James and Pier were the model for young couples everywhere. That was soon to end.

October 13th, 1964 was the fateful day which would forever change James Dean's life. After a heated argument with wife Pier Angeli, James stormed out of their Manhattan penthouse apartment in search of solitude. Nothing unusual for the couple at the time, "...fighting with Jimmy, goes with the territory," Pier once noted about their marriage. Myla Syrjaniemi, better

known as Vampira, forced her way into the Dean penthouse, murdering Pier Angeli Dean in a shockingly gruesome way that defies any bad horror film James may have done in the early sixties. In her testimony, Miss Syrjaniemi describes the homicide, "She kept lookin' at my Jimmy with those eyes and I had to teach her a lesson. You see, she didn't know what Jimmy and I had together, what we shared was the truth. Somethin' a whitebread, silverspoon girl like herself could never have known. She didn't know the real Jimmy like I did. He may have gone and married her but you can't separate the truth which is the soul. Anyways after cuttin' off all the fingers on her (Pier's) right hand I set both the twins in front of her and gouged her eyes out. She wasn't gonna look at my Jimmy again."

James received a call at friend Nick Adam's lower East side flat with the news; his wife dead and kids missing. The only clue that remained amongst the bloody mess was a drawing Syrjaniemi did of herself (as Vampira) and Dean that contained the now famous note with a kiss, "Jimmy, I love you forever, Vampira." The Dean twins were still darlings of the press at six-years-old and the shocking news of their kidnapping and eventual fate covered the front page of every newspaper in the states. The largest manhunt in the history of New York state followed, leading detectives to two dead children and a heroin induced Vampira. Jillian Pier Dean and her brother Julian James Dean were found in a blood covered basement tenement building in what looked like a hasty autopsy. James Dean, always the lover of life, had finally met death. His loving public had struck back with a vengeance and he would never psychologically recover from what became his, and a nation's, real-life horror movie.

Some critics say Dean became even better than ever after surviving the pain of the murders. But the charming boy, the spontaneous braggart, the caring man, was forever gone. His first major acting role after the tragedy was in 1967 with director Bernardo Bertolucci. *The Conformist* saw a Europeanized Dean, a much calmer man, still filled with angst, but for other reasons. He spent four years in Europe after the death of his wife, took a french girlfriend, model-actress Kiersten Faella, and travelled as the press put it, "to



1964. The most horrible murders in the history of the United States. The shocking note and the only clue that led police to Vampira, the murderer of Pier Angeli Dean and the Dean twins.

forget". During the promotion for the film a bold writer for the New York Times asked him again about the murders, "That which does not kill us, only makes us stronger. I forget who said that but I truly believe it."

Dean's love of racing brought him back to America in 1968 at the request of long-time friend Elvis Presley for a cameo appearance in *Speedway*. A worn and tired James Dean met an overweight and unhealthy Elvis. "I'm anxious to get back to work," he told the press, "and I'm hoping Mr. Presley will star in the next film I have written and intend to direct, *Twistin' For Jesus*." Unfortunately, he would not get a chance to make this film. Elvis' health deteriorated and he later died of food poisoning at a Mexican restaurant.

1968 through 1972 lost Dean from the public eye as he took a vacation from the movies to involve himself in social causes. Never the trendy liberal, James seemed to pick the wrong social causes as he lost popularity not only with the press, but with the public that once adored him. Aquatic rights, Gay rights and Anti-drugs were not popular stands of the Seventies and James supported them monetarily as well as being an outspoken leader.

The Godfather brought James back to the silver screen. Francis Ford Coppola begged Dean to accept the role of Don Corleone. Paramount was not convinced of his bankability and demanded a screen test. When studio executives saw the footage of Dean with cotton shoved in his mouth, along with the extra weight he put on, they were sold. *The Godfather* received rave reviews worldwide and brought Dean another best actor Oscar. "He was kind of a mentor to me. On the set he always had just the right kick to get you going," noted James Caan, a newcomer at the time. Diane Keaton relates from an interview in *American Film Magazine*, "Well, Jimmy is also a great director and I found it hard to look at Francis after every take. I always caught myself wishing it was Jim in charge." He would play the role of Don Corleone twice more to the delight of his renewed fans.

Filmmaker George Lucas, a devoted fan of Dean and fifties memorabilia in general, (which Dean had practically become at the time) cast him in science fiction film of the late seventies *Star Wars*. Critics argued as to why a film with such brilliant special

effects should leave one feeling so flat? The movie barely made back its 10 million dollar budget. James should have taken the advice of long time friend Rock Hudson and starred in the film that changed the face of cinema. *Can't Stop the Music* propelled the Village People into the institution they are today spawning the nine film saga (the last film *The Music Won't Stop-You Bet Your Ass!* goes into production this year). Pauline Kael said of Dean's poor judgement in selecting the role in *Star Wars*, "He was already a God in the eyes of his fans, it seems he wanted to become a true fictional God in science fantasy, they (his fans) were offended." And rightly so. James was becoming more crass in every interview. *Vanity Fair* magazine quotes him in what may be another of his depressed states, "People are just becoming leeches... they all want a piece of me. Don't they know I'm part of all of them." Dean did, however, get the chance to put in a cameo appearance in the third film of the music and dance epic, *We Won't Stop The Music*.

Dean longed to get back in the director's chair. It wasn't until 1980 that he would get his chance again. Dean



James made a cameo appearance in *Speedway* (1968) at the request of friend Elvis Presley. This cutting comic of a ragged Dean and an overweight Elvis was drawn on the set by a crewmember. Comic by R. Weatherly from Elvis' private collection.



Science fantasy and box office bomb of 1977, Star Wars. The financial failure of the film was blamed on director George Lucas' miscasting of Dean as the space sorcerer Obi-Wan Kenobi.

pitched *Rebel Without A Cause II* to Warner Brothers and they loved the idea of a sequel on the 25th anniversary of the original classic. In the film, Dean reprises his role as Jim Stark, but this time he plays the father. Scott Baio plays Tim Stark, a punk rocker who changes his name to Tim Terror in an attempt to rebel. Dean as writer and director deals with the rebellion of the fifties confronting the punk rock change of the early eighties. The film became a box office smash. *Rebel II* brought praise not only from the mainstream press, but from punk rock subculture itself. Johnny Rotten of the now defunct Sex Pistols raved, "Who better to make the punk rock film than the world's first punk." Dean had finally regained the attention and respect he enjoyed in his heyday in the early Sixties. Things couldn't be better until his stroke on the set of *The Outsiders* in 1983.

James' personal life was still kept secret from the press. His mystery blonde girlfriend was finally found to be actor Dolph Lundgren. "No girl has shoulders as broad as that," said a bitter house servant. Rumors of his bisexuality could no longer be silenced. Diversions aside, Dean surprised everyone by marrying his black nurse Robin Givens in fall of 1985.

Dean's continuing health problems kept him away from the director's chair but it didn't keep his fingers from the word processor. He wrote fifteen

screenplays from '82-87 and treatments for fifty-five films. Most have been sold to Paramount, others have been optioned to his Dean, Incorporated which started by buying the licensing rights to Hollywood's biggest stars. Legendaries such as Elizabeth Taylor, Marlon Brando, Elvis Presley, Albert Einstein, now long deceased, are licensed for use in ads and for sale as posters, calendars, t-shirts, etc... Dean, Incorporated has also been responsible for the Dean 5,000 Cross Country Road Race since 1968.

The Apple computer ads he did in 1987 left fans wondering if he had finally gone Yuppie and sold out. Dean's familiar line, "I wonder what Shakespeare would have rewritten if he had a Mac," became the catch-phrase of contempt against the aging star. He would make up for it that same year. With his health still a problem, Dean returned to the film forefront to star in and direct *The Color of Money* for Touchstone Pictures. Eddie Felson racked 'em up again with Scott Baio in the co-starring role.

The third film of *The Godfather* trilogy began shooting in September of this year. A happy Dean finished his scenes early on the 29th. He went into his study to work on a script late that evening. He was found by his wife Robin still holding a pages from his new script, *You Deserve It*.

The cover of the premiere issue

of *Smart* magazine sported a grinning Dean with an almost prophetic epitaph to his life, "James Ain't Jaded: Forever in the Fifties". Fortunate were the *Smart* publishers to have a jump on what will inevitably be a barrage of articles, books, and unavoidable TV movies on a man and his legacy. ■

FILMOGRAPHY

Dean appears (surprisingly) in all of these films.
(* director, ** writer/director, † cameo)

East of Eden (1955)
Rebel Without A Cause (1955)
The Left-handed Gun (1956)
Giant (1956)
Somebody Up There Likes Me (1957)
Cat On A Hot Tin Roof (1958)
Guns Up! (1960)
Burst Of Vermilion (1960)
The Hustler (1961)
Dark Side of the Mirror (1961)**
The Stand-Up (1962)**
Scott's Wake (1962)*
The Horror of the Creature (1962)*
Vampire A Go Go (1963)*
Brainsuckers from Hell (1963)*
Grease (Remake) (1963)**
Get Away (1963)**
Speedway (1968)†
The Conformist (1970)
The Godfather (1972)
American Graffiti (1973)†
The Godfather Part II (1974)
Star Wars (1977)
Rebel Without A Cause II (1980)**
We Won't Stop The Music (1982)†
The Outsiders (1983)*
The Color Of Money (1987)*
The Godfather Part III (1988)†

RAINER WERNER FASSBINDER

INTERVIEW BY BOZE HADLEIGH

During our ninety-or-so minute session, which ended abruptly with a nature-call, Fassbinder rarely removed his glasses. He also had a horn-rimmed pair of regular glasses, which I gathered were for reading. The man was far more intelligent than I'd have guessed from the night before, but his good English shouldn't have surprised me. His mother, by all accounts a remarkable woman, was the official German translator for Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote. Yet later I learned that Rainer often refused to speak English in front of his German cohorts, particularly on movie sets.

But though his responses—mostly in English—were fairly rapid, I had plenty of time for note-taking, thanks to the frequent pauses. At Rainer's request, I had my Sony radio on. It sat next to him on a table. He'd switch from the classical to a rock station, turning the volume up until I declared that I couldn't get down everything he was saying. Soft-spoken, but seemingly unemotional, Rainer wore heavy motorcycle boots and smiled only once. Whether or not it was deliberate, he gave a robotic impression, framed by the tall, geometric window and further diluted by gray light. I'm reminded of the print ad—I forget what for—in which the man sits in front of a TV or a stereo wearing sunglasses and no expression, his hair and neck scarf blowing in the wind. . . .

After emerging from the john, Rainer sat down again, but waved aside any more "interview-type" questions. As though it were important, he smiled and confessed that he'd woken up at 9:30. . . . Didn't I have any soft drinks on hand? I didn't. If he was hungry, I didn't want to keep him from lunch, but I wasn't sure if we were done. The director—who never addressed me directly or told me what I should call him—merely yawned a few times.

"I'd better leave you to lunch," he suddenly said, referring to the American lunch hour. Almost as quickly as he'd burst in, Rainer rushed out and down the stairs. I turned the radio off.

At about six, Fassbinder called. His voice was a bit slurred. "What are you having for dinner?" he asked.

"What, or where?"

"Can we go to dinner at eight? Can I come there and then we'll go out?"

"Just you? What about your friends?"

"Sometimes I prefer to be alone. . . . Yes or no?"

"Yes. Come, and be my guest for dinner. What kind of food do you like?"

"Anything. See you at eight o'clock."

He came at twelve minutes past ten, without apology or explanation. We walked a few blocks to a Vietnamese restaurant where I finally had to make

up our minds about the menu. At first, Rainer behaved normally, and even put away his glasses. But as dinner wore on, he began to tilt forward, then he'd jerk back and sit very straight. He picked at his food but ordered one Coke after another. The waitress looked at us long and oddly, which was nothing new in un-gay Paris.

Rainer was still answering questions clearly, though less rapidly.

But his pauses were frequently, disconcertingly punctuated by the precarious leans forward. At one point, I had to snatch his glass up from the table; I didn't mind the exorbitant drinks tab—not much—but I wasn't about to get embroiled in a broken dinnerware fracas in a nonfriendly Franco-Vietnamese *boite*.

What kind of thing makes you laugh, Rainer?

What. . . I'm not laughing.

But when you do, what makes you laugh?

How would I know? There's not much to laugh at. I don't laugh at bad jokes.

Do you have a good sense of humor?

I think so.

Some people say the Germans don't have the best sense of humor. . . .

Who says that?

Well, non-Germans, I admit.

. . .

You know, Rainer, I interviewed Luchino Visconti, years ago. And it's said he was an outstanding cameraman—I mean, he knew so much about the camera, and so do you. . . .

The camera is the most important way to make a movie, and I was making them when I was very, very young. (Shakes head.) I know everything about making a movie.

Do you have any opinion of Visconti's work?

I liked *Death in Venice*.

What about *The Damned*, which was set in 1930s Germany?

Very, very good. (Sits up.) No, it was very outstanding, and the characters were very unusual. I liked the colors—the orange and blood red.

And remember the green light that bathed the faces of the more reptilian characters?

The mother? The one who was raped by her son. . . .





RWF (1945 - 1982)

It wasn't a rape, though; she never protested. Do you know Helmut Berger?

(Smiles.)

Do you know Maximilian Schell, who's such a fine actor and director?

He's very, very intelligent.

I heard that *The Sound of Music* wasn't successful in Germany or Austria. . . . Why do you think?

American musicals . . . (Shrugs.)

Did the Nazi subplot turn German-speaking audiences off?

I think so. That was long ago. Germans like James Bond. . . .

Do you smoke cigarettes a lot?

What?

I gather it must be a lot, because your fingers. . . excuse me, but they're nicotine'd.

I smoke too much. Right now, I'm trying to cut down.

Any particular reason?

If someone around me doesn't smoke, it makes me feel ashamed.

Are you susceptible to, or influenced by, those around you?

Everyone is.

What do you think of contractual marriage, Rainer?

(Shrugs.) Marriage is marriage, with or without a contract.

You've been married . . .

Once, to a woman.

What about your long relationships with men?

. . . Papparazzi . . .

Well, may I ask why you married a woman?

What is your expression? *It seemed like the right thing to do at the time.*

Were you pressured into it?

Who isn't?

Are you still friends with her?

I married an actress. So we worked together, and . . . that helped.

Do gay actors or directors in Germany have to marry females for their images, nowadays?

I don't think so. I think the worst image is when you keep getting married, like a hobby.

Do you have any hobbies?

Work. When I'm not working, I'm with friends. . . . I like music—but loud, not from a little Sony transistor. (Laughs.)

Would you describe yourself as a workaholic?

Am I an addict? (Smiles.) I've been working less, lately.

But work is the basis of your life, isn't it?

As long as I keep working, there'll be fewer regrets.

Do you have any regrets in your life?

What would be the use?

I've read that you like fancy cars.

You have an American expression: *conspicuous consumption* . . .

What kind of food do you like?

This is very good. What's it called?

I'd have to look at the menu. Usually, what do you eat?

I don't eat so much; you think I do, because I'm fat, but I don't.

Are you dieting?

Yes.

I read that you admire American directors like Hitchcock and Douglas Sirk.

Yes. Very, very good storytellers.

Did you like *Psycho*?

Entertaining . . . but it's a right-wing movie.

How did you figure that?

The woman is punished for taking money from the upper class, and the man who is too close to his mother becomes crazy. You don't think Hitchcock was conservative?

I've heard he was anti-gay and somewhat asexual, from people who knew him. But I suspect most straight directors are anti-gay and/or conservative.

I say it because Americans often don't know about their own directors. Tell me, is Hitch still considered English in America?

I think British-American. He's considered Hollywood, through and through. That's an interesting question; you mean that the immigrant is never allowed to forget his roots, don't you?

In most countries, including ours.

Do someone's politics influence your opinion of their work?

No, unless they're extremist-reactionary. And you?

Good work is good work—look at Vanessa Redgrave. Her P.L.O. thing is deplorable—you know, de-P-L-O-rable? (No reaction.) But anyway, she's a fine actor. . . . You know, I didn't know a thing about Douglas Sirk until I interviewed Rock Hudson.

Is Rock Hudson nice?

Nice is such a meaningless word. But I like him—he's very easygoing and appealing. Do you like his work, or whatever?

He's been in some good movies. Gay, no?

Oh, yes. I was in Hong Kong last year. Went to a tailor shop, and there was a picture of Rock Hudson being fitted for a suit. I asked the Chinese tailor about it, and he said, I quote, "Rock Hudson likes boys." He meant males, of course. In fact, Rock doesn't have one age category, as so many straight or gay males do.

I'd like to work with him.

Why don't you ask him? He hasn't done a movie in a while.

Do you think he would play a gay character, *ein Warmbruder*?

I'm pretty sure he wouldn't. Which of Sirk's movies do you particularly like?

Most of them.

And what of other Hitchcock films?

Almost all of them.

Could you give an example, Rainer?

. . . . I enjoyed *The Birds*.

All that pecking and . . . pawing poor Tippi Hedron. What do you think of Sam Peckinpah, or do you know of him (a director with a fetish for violence)?

I don't always like to see things like that.

You mean Peckinpah does too much of it in his films?

Ja.

Why do you think that the world's only pre-sixties gay movement flourished in Germany, before the Nazis?

German people are always liberated about sex.

Then why did they let the Nazis try to wipe out homosexuality?

They let them do everything. But, one thing in defense, they didn't always know everything they were doing and planning.

The irony is that even if Hitler had killed every homosexual male and female—utterly impossible—from five to ten percent of all new births would eventually yield homosexual people.

. . . Ignorance . . .

Are you known to be anti-Nazi in Germany, or is that completely normal, so you don't have any problem from the, uh, fringe groups?

I have trouble . . . not just politics—the politics is in my movies. Class struggle is seen only as left wing, and also, since I'm gay, the right wingers and the Nazis hate me. They make death threats.

That's amazing.

It is true. Sometimes I need a bodyguard, and at my house, new installments, for protection.

Is this only recently?

I become more famous, so more threats.

Do you find that as you—or anyone—go from independent, low budget director to a top director with big budgets and international success, your admirers turn to enemies?

The bigger, the worse for the . . . celebrity.

In other words, they build you up, then they want to tear you down?

Punktlich! Precisely!

Do you ever fear for your life?

No.

But then, you also got a lot of gay protest when you produced the movie *Tenderness of the Wolves*, about a vampire like gay man who was a child-molester and murderer—a virtual Sweeney Todd. He even used their flesh as meat, didn't he?

He sold it, for that.

Well, that kind of movie's guaranteed to stir up homophobia. . . .

But it's true.

The difference between that and a true story about a similar heterosexual is that a movie about the straight man wouldn't provoke heterophobia—there's no such thing as heterophobia. Is it therefore responsible for anyone to make such a movie as *Tenderness of the Wolves*, particularly a gay man?

We cannot censor out truth.



Hanna Shygulla in
*THE MARRIAGE OF MARIA
BRAUN* (1978)



RWF with Rosel Zech in *VERONIKA VOSS*.

But choosing one subject or theme over another isn't censorship.

If we have no choice what films to make . . . (Shrugs.)

You have a choice, and you have a responsibility.

...

It's hard to imagine a Jewish filmmaker making a true film on a subject that will stir up and spread anti-Semitism. Doesn't this amount to homosexual self-hatred?

It exists. . . .

Gay self-hatred?

Yes, it exists. In many men.

Well, it's not surprising, is it? Every minority grows up with negative images put out by the majority, and every child wants to be like the rest. . . .

In Germany and all over Europe, there was much Jewish self-hatred during the war . . .

And such self-hatred is often exaggerated by a minority's enemies, offered as "proof" of the group's inferiority.

But if you don't bring this to the surface, how do you deal with it?

Well, a movie is the most public way of dealing with anything . . . Do you regret making *Tenderness of the Wolves*,—or producing it, I mean?

If I had directed it, it would have been different. But I didn't.

Do you think your movies will ever find mainstream success in America?

Has it happened with many European directors?

...

It doesn't matter. . . I don't want to have to change how I make something, so it can be successful far away from my own environment.

Do you basically make movies for yourself?

For me, but also so they succeed and reach people—inside the cinema, and inside them.

If you could have, would you have become an actor—a leading man, "Hollywood-style"?

I like being a star. (Smiles.) It is fun, and I like to wear clothes like a star. . . .

Stars have less to worry about, don't they?

I don't think so.

But directors have much more control—as do producers—right?

Yes. (Smiles.) It's good to have control.

One last Coke, and we left the multi-hyphenated restaurant. Rainer wanted to walk through Place de Clichy: "I haven't walked there alone." We didn't get there, for I steered us back. Rainer was under the influence, staggering and loping. He nearly tripped over several curbs, and his expansive gestures caught several eyes. He wanted to detour at every opportunity, and, being a large man, was difficult to steer.

I feared for his safety, what with the reckless Paris traffic, and the possibility that if he were widely recognized, a crowd might collect, and then the paparazzi. . . . Within a block of my hotel, Rainer demanded, "Let's go back to Amsterdam," turning it into a sing-song chorus. The Tunisian was away from the desk, and thank God for the elevators. Rainer asked for the radio to be turned on—loud—and repeatedly asked if I had any soft drinks. For the next hour or so, we made small talk, I asked and rechecked some questions, and I showed Fassbinder the magazines and booklet. These he flipped through, pausing briefly to look at some of the pictures.

Every fifteen minutes or so, he went into the bathroom and stayed several minutes. I went in once, and discovered little papers on the floor and white dust on my wooden comb. When I noted that he looked rather sweaty, Rainer muttered that he might use the room's portable-shower cubicle. I said go ahead, and he seemed tempted. Then he patted his significant stomach, winked, and decided not to.

At one point, Rainer broke the silence—I was jotting—and mentioned the subject of suicide. He asked if I'd known anyone who had committed suicide, but before I could answer, he offered, "A stupid way to say it—like to commit murder." We sat in silence, with the radio blaring. I waited for him to expand on his comment. Then:

So you don't think suicide is murder?

No . . . no, it isn't, because if you murder someone, you do it against his will. The victim has no choice.



RWF and Dieter Schidor on the set of *THE WIZARD OF BABYLON*, Schidor's documentary on the making of *QUERELLE* (1982)



Ali (El Hedi Ben Salem) with Emmi (Brigitte Mira) in FEAR EATS THE SOUL.

But obviously one doesn't commit suicide completely against one's own will...

Sometimes it's the only solution.

For who?

For somebody who is in torture. Not how long you live is important- are you happy?

Happy enough. No one's happy all the time, maybe even most of the time.

What if one is only happy doing one thing?

You mean like working?

Or anything.

Some of the people close to you have taken their own lives. Does the pain of that ever go away?

... (Shakes head.) No.

What's your personal feeling about suicide?

For me?

Would you ever do it?

(Angrily.) I'm too busy.

Then who has time to talk about it? Did I read right: Did you write plays?

Yes. *Katzenmacher* the movie was based on my play, the first one I did.

What do you think of your fellow playwright Tennessee Williams?

He is a very great man.

What do you think of his work, of specific plays?

His work is still very good. It's more innovation now.

What do you think of his problems with drugs?

(Shrugs.) Everyone has them.

Not everyone. Don't you think people who are around a lot of drugs, people who partake, sometimes think they're average—that is, that the whole world's on a drug trip?

Everyone's on a drug trip?

Not everyone... But let's quit this topic before I sound like a prude and you sound like an apologist.

A what?

Never mind. Now you often cast favorites of yours, like Gunther Kaufmann, who appeared in *Querelle*. Does this cause resentment among the rest of your cast and crew?

Why should it?

Well, why shouldn't it? In Hollywood, a producer might be able to get away with casting a girlfriend, or boyfriend or relative, in a tiny part. But casting a favorite in a major part?

No actor has ever let me down.

That speaks well for your relationships with actors, Rainer.

(Smiles.)

But, for instance, you cast Hedi ben Salim in the lead role of one of your films...



Hanna Shygulla and Elisabeth Trissenaar in THE MARRIAGE OF MARIA BRAUN.

Fear Eats the Soul.

And he wasn't an actor, to begin with.

Anyone can learn to act

And talent can be expanded upon. But, you can't put talent where it doesn't exist.

It was a good film; you should see it. Then you would see . . .

Most of your close friends, including Armin Meier, have been cast in your films.

Let's not talk about that anymore.

Okay. Do you agree with Hitchcock, who said that actors are cattle?

He shouldn't have said that.

Do you mean he shouldn't have said that, or he shouldn't have said that?

Both. (Smiles.)

Friends are probably easier to direct than actors with actors' egos, right?

Let's not even talk about actors . . . I'm an actor, too, and . . . but everyone wants to meet me just because I make movies, and so many movies.

Can you usually tell when people like you for yourself?

Who says they like me?

Well, you seem like a likable man.

You don't know me. How can you say that?

Your answers are pretty candid.

. . . I think this is a better conversation than an interview, but I'm bored.

Rainer began to yawn so much that I opened a window a bit to let in

some fresh air. He said what he required was "something to drink," and he was going out to get some. To make sure it wasn't liquor, I suggested I go with him. But he wanted to go alone, and left. Slamming the door behind him, he announced loudly, "I'll be back in a few minutes."

After half an hour, I figured he'd gotten home. I didn't have his number to call and check, and it was too late to bother Enrico, whom I'd call first thing in the morning. But ten minutes after that, Rainer was pounding on my door. I momentarily debated whether to let him in—I could pretend I was out. But his voice was very low, and I felt sorry for him.

"What happened, Rainer? Where did you go?"

He plunked himself down on the second twin bed and groggily allowed that he'd gone for a slice of pizza. And he'd had a couple of soft drinks, and brought one back with him. "I didn't think you wanted any," he said churlishly. I informed him that I was going to bed now, as I had an early flight the next day (actually at three P.M.). Rainer just grinned, then got up to turn on the radio, loud. I got right up and lowered the volume, reminding him sharply about the hour and the other guests, and reiterating that I had to get some sleep.

Like a pouting child, he slumped into the chair and feigned attention to the radio. He avoided my eyes. My irritation subsided, and I gently recommended that he take a cold shower in the cubicle. I thought that might soothe him, make him sleepy, or both. He reluctantly complied and began to strip. I kicked off my loafers and got under the covers in my clothes, turning my back to him. I heard the repeated rustle of fabric and the whoosh of leather, but no water running.

Turning and sitting up, I confronted a pitiful, heart-rending sight:

Rainer was quietly thrashing about and silently weeping. His socks and briefs were on, but his enormous bare belly loomed behind a barrier of clutched garments. Catching my eye, he averted his gaze and began to slowly bang his head on the wall of the portable shower. Fortunately, he soon stopped.

I got up, walked over to him, and put my arm across his fleshy back. In a split second, the vulnerability had turned to paranoid rage. "How dare you try to force yourself upon me! How dare you, how dare you!" He aimed to slap me, but I shifted and he grazed the side of my head. "Get out!" I shouted. He stared at me blankly. "*Raus-raus von hier!*" I ordered. He smiled menacingly, then rushed me, stopping in mid-lunge. Hastily, sloppily putting on his clothes, he began to curse me loudly. Mostly in German—words I hadn't learned in class and wouldn't find in a dictionary. He sputtered that I was a miserable host, a lousy interviewer, and a pushy human being with lecherous intentions.

The fire in his eyes was frightening. I didn't ask him again to leave. I half expected the Tunisian or his night porter to come knocking on my door. No such luck. The radio was turned on louder, and a fully dressed Fassbinder lay down, shaking, on the other bed. Literally within seconds, he was asleep, snoring mightily. I waited a minute or two, then crept to the radio to lower it. He roused himself and barked, "Leave it!"

"The other guests!" I hissed.

But he was asleep almost before I finished. Lying on his back, motorcycle boots sticking out toward the window, he snored louder than I'd thought anybody could . . . Some twenty long, seething minutes later, I walked slowly and quietly to the radio and lowered the volume. He didn't wake. Back on the bed, my shoes on, I pondered what to do, once I gave up on the night porter. I could call Rico and thus wake Fassbinder and sound like a fool, or try leaving the room. But naturally, the ancient door made a groaning sound every time it was opened or closed. I could say I was thirsty and going for a refreshment.

Yet I hated to leave a complete stranger alone in my room, with a valuable gift I'd planned to give Rico the following day. And if I did leave the room, where would I go? I'd be welcome at Rico's, but again pride . . . I could call him and have him phone Fassbinder's friends and have them retrieve their pet. But what if the suspicious Tunisian or the night porter—an unknown quantity—decided to take steps? Because of his Name, I couldn't risk Fassbinder's reputation at the hands of irate hoteliers and possibly the gendarmes.

In the end, I spent almost six miserable, seething hours of near sleeplessness, sitting guard over and against my guest. Once, he got up to pee, and angrily demanded why I wasn't asleep at that hour. I refused to utter a word; he formed a hammy fist and raised it threateningly. I stared defiantly, and he cursed in German, then went to the john. When he came out—without flushing—he again scolded me most Teutonically for attempting to lay hands on him and take advantage of his "everlasting stardom."

Of course, he turned the radio up again, and several minutes later I snuck up and turned it down. We did our radio routine several times for the first few hours. But four hours into the marathon, I turned it off for good. By that hour, I imagined that even in Paris a new ruckus would fetch a porter, somebody. I never found out . . . I must have slept more than I thought, but I was awake every half-hour on the clock.

At six A.M. on the dot, I gathered my seething anger and bounded crisply up from the bed. Poking Fassbinder twice on the left shoulder, I barked,

"It's time to get up! I'm sorry, but I'm leaving for the airport. Get up, please!" He was groggy, rubbed his squinting eyes. Raising himself tentatively, he looked up at me and smiled. Then he yawned noisily. I waited for him to say something, before repeating my command—maybe a little less sternly.

"I slept well." He smiled again. "How about you?"

"I survived." I half-smiled.

Rainer got up, went to the john to pee and comb his hair, and before walking out remembered. "Send me a copy if it's printed!"

Rainer Werner Fassbinder died at age thirty-seven on June 10, 1982 four years to the day after his lifemate Armin Meier. Born an "Ideal Aryan" on one of Hitler's Lebensborn eugenics farms, Meier was reportedly overly dependent on Fassbinder, who he felt neglected him. During one of Rainer's trips to Paris, Meier hung himself in their Munich home. He was found by Rainer's mother.

Earlier, one of Fassbinder's lovers, Hedi ben Salim, also hung herself, after stabbing three people in Berlin. Swiss director Daniel Schmid, one of Fassbinder's first lovers, told the press, "Rainer was an unhappy man who hurled himself into his work but had a low personal opinion of himself... He could not believe people could love him. All his life Rainer thought he was ugly.... The basis for his new friendships was always: you are a pig and I am a pig."

The future moviemaker's early life was not of a sort conducive to lasting happiness. His parents divorced, and his new stepfather couldn't stand him. Rainer chose to live with his father, and wealthy landowner and slum landlord. It was the shy, sensitive teenage Rainer who was sent to collect the excessive rents from the typically impoverished Turkish "guestworkers" in Cologne. For most of his youth, Rainer was not close to his mother, who once took a domineering seventeen-year-old for a lover; the young man tried in vain to play stepfather to young Fassbinder.

When Rainer applied to Berlin's prestigious Film Institute, he was rejected. All his life, the M.D.'s son regretted his lack of a higher education. But although his first celluloid efforts were practically one-man shows, budgeted at around \$25,000, he quickly made up for lost time. Between 1969 and 1982, he directed forty-three movies, including lengthy TV miniseries. His *Lola*, a remake of *The Blue Angel*, was, at \$10 million, Germany's most expensive film up until that time. And in spite of *Querelle's* explicit homoerotic nature, it was co-financed by the Berlin Senate—after Fassbinder signed to direct.

Besides movie-directing, the man wrote thirty-seven screenplays, fifteen plays which he also directed, and numerous radio scripts; he acted on stage and on screen, and shot, edited, and produced several of his own and others' motion pictures. Fassbinder was virtually an offshoot of his own gargantuan career, which almost single-handedly restored German cinema to its pre-Nazi international eminence.

From the 1960s on, Rainer overindulged—in booze, uppers, downers, LSD, and cocaine. He often smoked four packs a day, too, yet in his final year he would fearfully tell friends that he didn't want to die. He also told people that he envied Steven Spielberg and wanted to emulate his record-breaking success. Up to the last, several projects were pending. On the final nights of his life, Rainer called Daniel Schmid in Paris and told him that he'd flushed all his drugs down the toilet—all except one line of cocaine.

Fassbinder's body was found with a burnt-up cigarette between his lips and notes on his next film under his head. There was evidence of cocaine, pills, and whiskey. A movie addict to the end, he'd been watching his video machine. It was playing *20,000 Years in Sing Sing*.

Reprinted from the book CONVERSATIONS WITH MY ELDERS, St. Martin's Press, author Boze Hadleigh. The book also contains shockingly frank interviews with Sal Mineo, Lucino Visconti, Cecil B. DeMille, George Cukor, and Rock Hudson.



Fassbinder (dead) and Adrian Hoven in SHADOW OF ANGELS.

POSITIVE/NEGATIVE

POSITIVE/NEGATIVE gives the experts an opportunity to write about their craft. Everything from writing, directing, special effects, & more . . .

WHAT DO YOU SAY TO AN ART FAG? or THE MERITS OF FILM SCHOOL

BY DAVID WILLIAMS

"... beginning film students naturally and appropriately show sympathetic interest in and encouragement for each other's early efforts, as does, in most cases, the instructor. This is fine for the beginner, but often even as the student grows more advanced he will receive little or no negative comments on his work."

"... blind encouragement (from sympathetic audiences) is precisely the thing that will contribute to the rising number of mediocre and derivative filmmakers clamoring for, and believing they are deserving of, attention."

- Fred Camper

When I'm introduced to friends of the family, distant relatives, or the parents of the girl I happen to be seeing at the time, a certain question is invariably asked when it's heard that I attend college:

"So, what are you studying up there?"

"Uh, filmmaking." I gasp, with the taste of my lunch rising in my throat.

"Ooooooh, how interesting." What's-Her-Face's-Mom coos, "... does that mean you learn how to take pictures?"

Right. That's where I learn to take pictures, take notes, take home tests, and take my life in four easy steps. Things are strange there, in an institution that attempts to make you a "creative" person. Classes are set up to assist in finding your aesthetic view of the world and you are graded as to how well you express yourself. Instructors make odd diatribes about the uselessness of such and such, and the mind expanding virtues of this and that (which usually turns out to be either a film like *Wavelength*, or an article blasting the ethnographic work of John Marshal as constructionist documentary). Sometimes there are lectures based on the CIA's clandestine efforts to use cocaine as a socially controlling tool.

Hmmm, all very interesting. But when are we going to take pictures?

I thought that's what "Film School" was designed to do: teach the technology and techniques useful in making one's personal visions accessible to others (i.e. using film as a transmissional medium).

Well, apparently not. As a film production major at San Francisco State University, I can tell you that certain ends of the educational stick don't get a fair shake, or even an inspiring rub. Theory is the name of the game here my friend. Granted, to understand an art form, it's often necessary to do extraordinary amounts of research. And the funny thing about theory is that it's not just bullshit, as many people claim. The problem with film writing is the people who write it: may that be Maya Deren, Stan Brakhage, Vertov, or Godard. Here are incredibly intelligent people with interesting ideas, but, unfortunately, massive egos to match. Consider the following:

"I am eye. I have created a man more perfect than Adam; I create thousands of different people in accordance with previously prepared plans and charts."

I am eye.

I take the most agile of one, the fastest and most graceful legs of another, from a third person I take the handsomest and most expressive head, and by editing I create an entirely new perfect man."

- Dziga Vertov

"Oh transparent hallucination, superimposition of image, mirage of movement, heroine of a thousand and one nights (Scheherazade must surely be the muse of this art), you obstruct the light, muddle the pure white beaded screen (it perspires) with your shifting patterns....."

- Stan Brakhage

You talk the talk, but do you walk the walk?

What's so frustrating is that these grand (if ego serving) passages contain what are essentially simple ideas, valuable concepts that could be clearly spoken in few words:

(1) Through editing, one can construct a new whole.

(2) Watching a film... uh, right.

Sure, it can be interesting to hear some artist wax poetic, but who needs the tack-on magic of this mumbo jumbo?

Another problem with film theory in the academic situation is that it often serves not as a starting point for beginning filmmakers to develop their own ideas, but as a treasure to be plundered: resulting in work that is merely derivative. At many screenings of "new" work, it's possible to assume (with uncanny precision) which theorist's writings each respective filmmaker had recently read.

Ooooooh, look.... uh, huh... Brecht. Definitely Brecht.

The fans of Godard make disappointed narratives, as the cinepoets busily follow the constructionist themes of Vertov. It's said that imitation is the most sincere form of flattery, but how many times must I be subjected to remakes of *Man With A Movie Camera* or *Masculine, Feminine*? God, I hated them the first time around.

I began this article with a quote by Fred Camper that angered many of my peers. Only moments after its introduction in class last year there came the familiar rally cries of the untalented: "Personal expression cannot be judged as good or bad... To call something bad is a matter of taste or lack of... etc... etc..."

These are good excuses for people to use when their work is in question (or simply dismissed as crap), but the truth is: there's good, there's O.K., and there's downright shitty. Every movement, school of thought, and practice contains equal potential for greatness and utter failure. Why can't people admit that they fail? I've worked long and hard on certain projects, patiently honing down the rough edges before revealing them to an audience; my chest filled with pride... only to have all my expectations disappointed as the projector lamp switches off and my ears are greeted with the sound of suppressed giggles, shuffling feet, and the distant calling of crickets.

Ooops, I guess it didn't work. I blew it.

So what happens then? Well, it depends. If it's really stinko, there could be comments like: Gee, that was a beautiful sky in that one shot, what day did you shoot it? What kind of film did you use? It was really well lit, and in focus. That was really well framed...

As a serious person, I find these words to be kind, yet utterly worthless and only to be greeted with contempt. I know that fear is the only reason for these remarks; fear that if something "not-so-nice"

might be said about their work. When feelings replace constructive criticism, nobody profits by showing their work (except the egomaniacs).

By criticism I'm not referring to the act of jumping on top of the nearest table and screaming "This is pure, unadulterated shit! Get a rope!"

No.

Wrong.

Despite the fact that a person's work may indeed be pure, unadulterated shit, there's no real reason to deliberately hurt people's feelings. What's the point? Perhaps to enforce your own faltering confidence by tearing down someone else? Pretty weak, I suggest you find therapy for this ailment.

Still, here we are. In the middle of a room full of relatively silent, probably uncomfortable, possibly sleeping, strangers. A person might think this is where an instructor might step in, make examples, lead in a discussion, or perhaps give a little feedback on his/her thoughts. This is rarely the case. The truth of the matter is that I've never heard a single serious condemnation squeeze its way past an instructor's lips. Maybe a "Well, this could be improved by..." or "That's interesting how you..." but not an inkling as to their personal/gut reaction. Certainly there may be brutally critical whims violently tossing between their ears, but if these thoughts are never said: what use are they? Something good is found within the morass of bad and is praised. Yuck.

To serve as an example of these problems:

A TRUE STORY

One day, after watching a series of particularly bad films, the instructor noticed the grimace on my face and asked for my opinion of the work. Everyone in class turned and faced me. I replied, "I think we've had enough MTV for the morning" (which isn't the most offensive thing that could have been said). Dead silence hit the room. I think I heard the woman sitting next to me ovulate (kind of a low grinding sound accompanied by a soft splash). The Frenchman artist responsible for some of the work whispered to me, "If you don't like it, don't come to class" while the other cine-poet trained his bugging blues to the spot directly between my brows. I think he was trying to use his telekinetic powers to melt my brain (or something like that), so I left.

I've been told: "Gee Dave, you should have gone off on that guy. Really torn him down."

Trust me, it's not worth it. These people are so set in their little artsy-craftsy ways that argument is pointless. Except of course when you're in the mood for brutally tongue-lashing some idiot who strikes you of being particularly worthy of such abuse.



S.F.S.U. FILM STUDENT, MICHAEL ANDERS, SHOOTS A SHORT.

They're also oblivious to any form of suggestive, or constructive criticism; brushing aside valid comments and suggestions as easily as they might an annoying insect. All the while uttering the immortal words: "Oh, well... I meant to do that."

Fuck you. Gimme a break.

There's also the flip side of the coin, small patch populated by small people who simply attach an insult to everything that comes their way. Calling something "total shit" or "the fuckin' worst" without qualification is as worthless as the empty praise offered by the rest. These boneheads are well represented by certain members of the department, but in no greater a percentage than they are found anywhere else. (Luckily, it's this kind of "individual" that has either quit reading this article or never got past the title.)

If we flash back for an instant, maybe this is the reason for the limp behavior of most of the instructors... they know it doesn't do any good.

If you're only interested in pleasing yourself, and you don't care how something is seen by others; fine, you wouldn't have a problem. Likewise, if you're interested in gathering high praise for mediocre work. But, if you're interested in how your work is coming across, you've got a big one. If you go to someplace like State.

Hearing all this negativity, you may be asking yourself: what if someone is actually producing good, thought provoking work that has some impact on the way an audience might feel or view the world as a whole?

It's really a 50/50 split. Good luck. With all the boneheads out there, a person

like that might really make something of him/herself or be lost in the shuffle. I'm very sorry.

Getting back to taking pictures, SFSU has a wealth of expensive equipment. Cameras, recorders, mixing rooms, etc... etc... That's great. But how many people know how to use it? Very few. That's bad. Only by scrounging, prying, and begging does a person really learn what this stuff can do. (There are graduate students available to help you, and some of them are truly interested in the welfare of you and your work, but that's another story.) Certain courses are designed specifically to train you to use the equipment, but they fail miserably due to a single equation:

One (1) instructor divided by too (?) many students = little time.

Nuff said.

So what does someone get out of this mess?

Why go to school?

Why not (as Chris Gore has so often suggested) just skip school and put tuition money directly into a film?

There are certain benefits, all of which are valuable in their own way. But before I go into these reasons, I'd like to give time to two graduates of the department. As everyone has an individual experience, everyone has an opinion.

The problem with State is that it has no sense of the real world. They pride themselves on a documentary/non-commercial curriculum, but don't realize that their grads are starving because of this. In trying to be so non-commercial and (supposedly) avant-garde, they cut their students' throats when it comes time to find a



TODD LONGWELL, ANOTHER FILM SCHOOL GRADUATE WITH NO FUTURE.

job in the film community. They need more practical courses and an understanding that by training their students in how to work within the system, they will be able to affect a greater change in that system.

- Patrick Donnelly

So, film school.

Useful. I found San Francisco State University Film Production to be lacking in many areas, most of them directly related to money.

Listen.

Not enough production equipment-
Money.

Not enough permanent, full time
instructors-

Money.

But film is about learning in spite of
limitations, so forget all that.

What really pissed me off was that
there were several instructors holding full
time positions who basically ignored the

students' needs unless the students backed
them in a corner and threatened them with
evisceration. If you want to get it done, do it
yourself.

That's it.

- Scott Smerdon

So what are the advantages?
Meeting other disillusioned dolts who parted
with tuition fees? Taking advantage of
underclassmen/women to occupy shitty
production assistant jobs? Using expensive
equipment at no cost? Torturing those
around you just for your own sadistic/
juvenile reasons? For your parents?

Or is it some genetic flaw of yours
calling for a leave of absence from the real
world out there? Begging for a breather... a
place to hide out so you can make up your
mind... a place to waste time because you
don't know what to do; or you're too scared
to do it.

Yes, there are the advantages; no
matter how stupid or weak they seem to be.

Actually, the truth lies somewhere
in that grey zone that both Scott and Pat
referred to as an area reached by "change"
and "doing it yourself". Working within the
limitations as they are in a structured
system, one becomes resourceful. As
society works as a system, it's better to learn
while you're young... how to exploit it that is.
No, film school won't teach you. You have
to teach yourself. But, within this hostile
environment, a world dominated by idiots,
brown-nosers, and waterheads, that comes
quickly.

But then again, someone could do

all that in the comfort and privacy of his/ her
own home, or someone else's home for that
matter.

So make up your own mind. If a
little piece of paper is so important to you:
go for it. If not, don't.

"Everyone out there has a degree,
and if they don't, they say they do. Nobody
checks."

- Todd Longwell

Graduate of UCLA Dept. of
Motion Pictures and Television

Find out for yourself... and then do
it for yourself. But before you do anything,
remember the 10-80-10 Rule.

10 percent of the people will work hard.
80 percent will do just enough to get by.
And 10 percent won't do shit.

I have, of course, ignored
everything that neither interests nor affects
me, so write your own filth. *

David Williams is a film student from San
Francisco State University whose credits
include a few short films entitled, ZODIAC
SPEAKING, PENETRATION and MAN IN A
CAN. Needless to say, he causes a lot of
trouble in class.

T E C H T I P S

THE SHAKI-CAM™

You don't need to spend hundreds of dollars
renting a Steadi-Cam™ to get those smooth
moving shots. Do you know how much it costs
just to pay the specially trained professional to
run one of those things, not to mention rental
fees of the actual equipment?

All you need to simulate the same effect
is a long board and your camera. Mount your
camera to the board with screws or some duct
tape. Now run! Sam Raimi used this
technique in the first EVIL DEAD. The SHAKI-
CAM (also known as the Sam-Cam) will give
you that expensive look for practically nothing.



Illustration by Scott Parrish.



Creepy Rick's Crypt



*Morticia. Lilly Munster. The Brides of Dracula. Vampirella. Vampira—The women of horror have been a fascination to this ghoul since pre-puberty. Now, joy of joys. I get to meet one live on the phone! I spoke with **ELVIRA** about her upcoming feature film, **ELVIRA, MISTRESS OF THE DARK**, and learned a few other things about the macabre movie hostess. It was a dreadful delight.*

Hello this is Creepy Rick?

Indeed, Elvira? How are you doin'?

Good. How's it goin'?

Good. Good.

So, I read your magazine the other day I was at UCLA and I went to the magazine bookstore and it was there.

So what'd you think?

I thought it was real funny. I liked it. I thought it was really great.

Yeah, we try to be a little off the wall.

Yes, it's very off the wall. It's good.

Well, thanks. So, let's talk about the movie. It's called...

Elvira, Mistress of the Dark.

(I drop the phone in utter disbelief and excitement. I'm actually talking to Elvira. Those—that —uh...she's not far from my boiling blood!)

When are we lookin' at a release on this?

September 30th, 1988. *(The anniversary of the death of James Dean, what a coincidence)*

How are things going right now, is everything wrapped up?

It's going really good, I have some pick up shots that I'm going to be doing next week. And we're shooting a big song and dance number.

Is it scary?

The movie or the dance number?

Both.

(LAUGH) Well, I hope the dance number is not going to be but the movie not really what you'd call a scary movie, no.

More like campy horror?

Yeah, it's not made to be real scary, there's a couple sordid scary moments.

Who directed it?

Jim Signorelli and he directed Rodney Dangerfield in **Easy Money**. Also for the last seven years he has been directing all the short films on Saturday Night Live, y'know the commercial take-offs.

What's the plot? Is there a plot?

It starts out, I'm a horror movie hostess in L.A., which I am, and I'm getting fed up with my job and as luck would have it a telegram arrives and an aunt has passed away that I didn't even know I had and she's left me an inheritance and my real dream is to try and get out of this crummy job I'm in and go to Vegas and be a headliner there and star in my own Vegas show. So, I have to get the money to put my act together and go to Vegas so when I get this telegram from my aunt I figure, Oh Great I'm gonna get all this big bucks. So, I quit my job and travel all the way across the country to this town called Fallwell, Massachusetts, which is kind of like a Salem Massachusetts type town. I kind of move into the town and all the people hate my guts because it's an extremely conservative New England town. So here's this woman that looks like Elvira coming into their town, which



TITS! KNOCKERS! BOOBS!

go to Vegas so I can't really tell you. . .

Don't give away the ending. I heard that you did work in Vegas as a stri-

Yeah, I was a showgirl there so it's kind of like my own nightmare coming true going back to Vegas.

Any names you want to drop, who's in it?

Well, there's no big stars a few well known actors Edie McClurg, she was in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, she played the principals

secretary, and Morgan Shepard who plays my uncle, played the older guy with the mohawk on the *Max Headroom* show, Jeff Conway from *Taxi-*

Oh, I was hoping Pee Wee was in it.

Yeah, I was too actually. It's funny, Pee Wee and I long ago talked about each of us doing cameos in each other's movies and then what happened was we were filming our movies exactly at the same time, so he was working 5-11 and I was working the same hours on mine, so that great idea fell by the wayside.

So you and him are friends I hear?

Yeah, we're real good friends, we have been for, God, for 10, 11 years, way before he was Pee Wee and I was Elvira.

Wow, what an odd couple!

Y'know I often think how bizarre it is that we both ended up doing such a similar thing really. One had nothing to do with the other and we both ended up being these cartoon characters, it's really a very odd coincidence. It may not be totally coincidence, it may come from our background both being in this group

called the Groundlings, this group that we were both in. The way I met Paul (*Pee Wee*) was that we were both in the Groundlings which is like L.A.'s version of Second City, a real popular comedy improvisational group so one of the things we did in improv was develop these different weird characters. He developed Pee Wee at the Groundling, however I did not develop Elvira at the Groundling. I developed it... I got an audition where they just wanted this horror hostess then I had to think of a character. So I ended up in a weird looking outfit. I guess it's not totally coincidental. My other best friend, also from the Groundling, who writes Pee Wee's television show and is Jombi the Geenie is John Paragon, and he also wrote my movie with me and has been writing my movie macabre scripts, my TV show with me for 6 or 7 years, so I mean (*LAUGH*) he's another cartoon character.

So, are you ever going to be on Pee Wee's Playhouse?

I'd have to severely alter the cleavage I'm afraid. It'd be fun to be on, but I have a policy of never wearing anything higher cut than my dress, no matter what they want to do. If you don't like it then tough! (*She'd be competition for Globey!*)

Any sequels on the horizon or plans beyond this?

It'll all depend on if the movie's successful or not. Yeah, we have begun thinking about sequels. So far the movie looks really good, if I do say so myself, it looks like it's going to be real funny, everybody is real happy with it so I have my fingers crossed if there's going to be a sequel. I really would like to make another film rather than going back and hosting more horror movies which I love, but I've pretty much exhausted the library of bad horror movies.

Got any favorite horror movies?

They're like so bad I don't know if you'd call them favorite. I like all the Edward G. Wood movies, nothing surpasses those, I've seen bad stuff but his takes the cake. Of course, I've never been able to host any of these because I haven't been able to get a hold of whoever holds the rights. Everything from *Plan Nine* to *Glen or Glenda* are absolutely brilliant.

Do you like more classic horror stuff,

they're not too happy about. It's kind of got shades of *Harper Valley PTA*. So I come into town and my inheritance is a house, my aunt's dog, and a book, and I end up having to live in town and find a job there.

Did they need a horror hostess?

No, they didn't need a horror hostess. So I try to get a normal job there but no one will hire me and so while they are trying to get me out of town I discover an Uncle who I've never met and in this part of the movie you see a flashback, the Roots of Elvira.

All right! The Origin?

It's weird and kind of flashes back into my past. You find out I was raised in an orphanage by nuns, and you find out that I also came from a kind of mysterious... my mother turns out to have been a sorceress and I have inherited these powers that I didn't know I had. So then the movie kind of takes off, the uncle tries to take the powers away from me and I'm kind of oblivious of the whole thing happening and it becomes a battle between the town and myself to get me out and the uncle trying to get the power away from me and me trying to get enough money to get the hell out of this town and

y'know Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Karloff...

Yeah, I like them a lot. I don't usually use that for my show because I never want to knock what I consider to be a really good movie, I mean, I don't think the horror fans would appreciate it either. But I do get my share of Peter Cushing, John Carradine, all those guys 'cause I've done the library of Hammer films. I love Vincent Price too, he's my idol.

Would that be a dream, to work with him someday?

I have worked with him, he's been on my television show a few times and we've done various talkshows together. We did the Tonite Show together, we've done a lot of Sci-Fi Awards, things like that. I wanted Vincent Price very much for the title role in my movie to play the uncle, and as a matter of fact I named the character Vincent and unfortunately at this time in his career he's decided he doesn't want to do any more horror movies. Bad timing.

What's he like? He seems like a real nice guy.

Not only is he the nicest guy, but he should be a stand up comedian. He's the funniest guy in the world. I mean, I look up to him not as a horror actor, but as a comedian. He's absolutely brilliant. The guy is a crack-up, y'know he's sort of getting up there in years but he has the sharpest wit in the world. He's just a really wonderful person and I love him.

That's one thing I've noticed, the really good horror actors are the complete opposite in real life, they're not real dark evil characters.

I know isn't that funny, this is true. Everyone I've ever met is like the sweetest, nicest. I'd even put myself in that category. I mean everyone expects me to be the world's meanest bitch. A lot of people are surprised when they meet me "Oh, I can't believe you're so nice!" It's always a shock to them, I think I'm so normal.

BAZOOMS! BREASTS! TORPEDOES!

Anything else you want to say about the movie besides go see it?

I think people are going to be surprised. This is not what people are going to expect. From the test audiences that we had, I don't know what they're expecting, but at the end of it they're saying, "God, this is not at all what we expected." Perhaps they expect me to be hosting a movie. I think people will be real surprised about what it is, it's not what people will think it will be.

As long as Elvira is in the movie, we don't care what it's about.

When he's not writing horror for publications like FILM THREAT and MONSTERS A GO-GO, Creepy Rick howls and groans horror with his Monster-Rock band The 3-D Invisibles. For info on the band and their records write:

**NEUROTIC BOP RECORDS
1316 W. MARSHALL
FERNDALE, MI 48220**

Also send any horror related movie news, blood samples and abnormal brains.





V
A
M
P
I
R
A



E
L
V
I
R
A

VERSUS

"I hope you have been lucky enough to have had a horrible week." This is how Vampira (Maila Nurmi) began her Saturday evening show in the fifties. Elvira obviously owes a lot to Nurmi, but there's a few things she has that Vampira doesn't. Namely, a likeable charm, a successful TV show, and tits.

Ms. Nurmi recently filed a multi-million dollar lawsuit against Cassandra Peterson (Elvira) for unfair competition and invasion of privacy. Nurmi contends that her creative trademark, her public reputation, and her ability to market her lucrative character have been severely harmed.

Peterson claims that *Elvira* is original because she has never seen a *Vampira* show.

"There is no Elvira. There's only a pirated Vampira. America has been duped. I want to put people on notice not to buy stolen goods." says an embittered Nurmi.

Vampira currently lives off Social Security.



Interview

BY PAT HOLLIS & JACK STEVENSON



GEORGE IN ONE OF THE KUCCHAR BROTHERS BENT BOHEMIAN SOAP OPERAS FROM THE 60S.

George Kuchar is primarily known as an underground filmmaker and film instructor in San Francisco. Most of his films are shown either at art institutes or small film societies, with very few ever released theatrically. It has been my experience that most underground films are more interesting to read about than to actually see.

One film that is just as interesting to see as read about was Curt McDowall's *THUNDERCRACK!* (1976, 150 min) which was co-written by Kuchar, and also featured him in a rather bizarre role. It did receive limited theatrical release. After seeing this film, you can understand why John Waters claims Kuchar as an influence. The theme is a weird mixture of the *old dark house* theme with hardcore sex as an integral plot element. Dialogue ranges from Tennessee Williams to absurdist style, with a healthy dose of bad taste humor. This is one of the very few movies which successfully integrates hard-core sex into a storyline, with various boy/girl, boy/boy combinations as well as various masturbation and bestiality scenes between George Kuchar and a character in an obviously fake gorilla (female) suit. In a hilarious flashback monologue, George explains how he was raped by a gorilla. What makes the sex scenes interesting is the use of amateur or semi-professional actors/actresses who don't have the bored expressions usually associated with "X" movies.

When I saw *THUNDERCRACK!*, it seemed overly long, with poor sound

GEORGE KUCCHAR

quality, but it still does surface occasionally, and is well worth the admission price.

The titles alone of Kuchar's films belie his humor and film influences, e.g., *ECLIPSE OF THE SUN*, *VIRGIN*, *WILD NIGHT IN RIO*, *REASON TO LIVE*, *I WAS A TEENAGE RUMPOT*, *DEVIL'S CLEAVAGE*, and two of my favorites, *I, AN ACTRESS* and *SINS OF THE FLESHPOIDS*. From the ones I've seen, I have to conclude they are at least interesting, hilarious, and worth seeking out.

You might also be on the lookout for two films making the rounds of the college circuit—*WEB OF FIRE* by Michael Rudnick (1981, 18 min), starring Kuchar as a "genius" director putting his masterpiece together with

associated difficulties and an appropriate ironic ending. The second, and most interesting for people who are not familiar with Kuchar's work, is a documentary by David Hallinger, appropriately titled *GEORGE KUCCHAR—THE COMEDY OF THE UNDERGROUND* (1982, 66 min). This film alternates between brief shots of Kuchar films, his appearance at a San Francisco retrospective, and clips of him filming a work-in-progress (at that time about the Sasquatch). It also includes an interview with Kuchar. The film is chaotically edited, but not so much as to make it incomprehensible, and it highlights his obsessions and humor in both his films and personal life.

By the way, George has a twin brother, Mike Kuchar, who has been involved in many of his films, which he talks about in the interview.

When did you start making films?

I began making regular 8mm movies with my twin brother, Mike, when we were around 11 or 12 years old in the Bronx, New York. I still make regular 8mm movies now and then but also do super 8 and lots of 16mm (trying to keep the cost down by doing things wrong).

When did you start shooting 16mm?

I started making 16mm movies in 1965 as we both had jobs in Manhattan and were earning . . . enough to slowly buy the necessary equipment. We had also been making 8mm for so long that we enjoyed the novelty of the larger format.



The shower scene from HOLD ME WHILE I'M NAKED with Donna Kerness and Hope Morris.

It was nice also to have the sound on the film print and not have to be present to operate projectors and tape recorders, making sure that everything was in sync. You did get to know your audience more intimately in this way... but it got to be exhausting on the nerves.

How many films have you made with your brother, and what are they?

In the old days my brother and I used to take turns directing sequences in the same movie. When I would get tired of creating he would be handed the camera and control of the performers. We worked this way on *Tootsies in Autumn*, *Pussy on a Hot Tin Roof*, and *I Was A Teenage Rumpot*, among others. Although we are twins, we are very different in personality, timing and looks (at least in the present). His shots took their time; mine were frenetic in the editing. His characters were more meditative. My people tend to suffer in a kinetic mode.

John Waters names you as a major influence. Have you seen any of his work, and what do you think of it?

John Waters is a fine, twisted, human being and his body of work is quite refreshing in manner of execution and in final form. He enjoys, very much, the star-studded tinsel of film festivals and is able to squeeze as much pleasure as he can out of them. We are, strangely enough, both interested in tomadic storms and have some of the same books on the subject. I think that his movie, *Female Trouble*, is quite a magnificent and sweeping saga worthy of Edna Ferber.



George Kuchar with David Hallinger on the set of *THE COMEDY OF THE UNDERGROUND*.

What film directors have influenced you?

I am pretty much a large sheet of blotting paper, whatever I see influences me. My head is pretty well crammed with at least 30 years of TV and cinema, along with lurid paperback book illustrations about the adult world. This all comes pouring out when it's filmmaking time. Directors who have influenced me are Sidney Lumet, Ella Kazan, Roger Corman, Douglas Sirk, Josef Von Sternberg and King Vidor.

What current films and directors do you like?

Currently I appreciate the films of so many people that not one single name sticks out. I'm glad that many of them are able to work in the professional movie-making world. We have tried to find the environment that is most conducive to stimulating the visions. Some of us must work in the nurturing comfort of obscurity as the world of the big people makes us nervous.

What aspect of filmmaking do you enjoy the most?

I enjoy pretty much all the aspects of filmmaking and get a kick out of doing them all. I love photography, but do tend to worry about exposure readings. Directing is stimulating but many times I get nervous pushing around new people into strange poses. Screenwriting is a special high but its transference onto celluloid can be frustrating when you finally have to tack the physical set-ups. Editing may be the most pleasurable as you are alone with the fruits of all that tough work and you don't have to worry about all the things I listed above. The loneliness, though, does tend to make you neurotic.

Have you finished your Sasquatch movie?

The Sasquatch movie is all finished and is called *Yolanda*, being the name of the main character who is obsessed with this subject. The film is a brief study of this obsession and the eventual deteriorating of the personality as the man-

beast or the she-beast becomes internalized. I do believe that bigfoots, or bigfeet, exist and that they are not 100% physical. There's something cock-eyed in their make-up and they are offensive to the atomic age.

The early 1960s seemed like a great time to be alive and fucking around with film, like the whole underground movement was taking malformed shape. John Waters always mentions Hold Me While I'm Naked as an early influence on him when he was a no-good teenager coming up to New York City.

Now it was kind of an exciting time, and there was—of course we (Mike & George Kuchar, the Kuchar Bros.) had been making movies way before, 8mm, and our friends were paying attention to it. And now this underground movement, got to meet a lot of other people making films. And then we saw these 16mm movies and said, "Oh wow, you can see so much more detail, you can put the sound on the film also. . . ." and 8mm didn't seem like too big of a deal. I had to get a new projector so I said maybe we're gonna rehaul and just get 16mm. It was nice to be in New York at that time. Although New York ain't always that nice to be in. But when you're *there*, it'll probably eventually get worse, so, enjoy it now, then forget about it, leave it, you know. Yeah, *Hold Me While I'm Naked* was my most popular film. I think it took about 6 months to a year to catch on, and then when it caught on, it was played a lot. I had liked it myself very much. But, ah . . . I never met John Waters in New York, you know. I met John Waters later, in San Francisco.

Is there anything similar going on today? Anything that can be called underground anymore?

Yeah, there's plenty of that going around. But you gotta be in the big bucks a little bit now, to afford that damn film. Of course you can make it in super 8. There's tons of stuff goin' on. People workin' and makin' real, ah. . . . trash. Interesting trash, and making kind of elegant stuff. And then of course, there are people making kind of "politically correct" stuff, and. . . . that kind of trash, too. So, there's still a lot going on, a hell of a lot going on. In San Francisco a lot. And New York. New York you're suppose to kvetch a little more than San Francisco. New York is always kvetch, kvetch, kvetching! At least that's what the filmmakers there tell me.

Did any of these early NYC filmmakers like Jack Smith or Warhol or Ron Rice influence you or was it mostly the stirring Hollywood epics?

Now I got influenced by everybody. And probably a lot of my work has scenes lifted from other things because ah. . . . they just imprint on me, and then when it comes time, just cough it up. Sometimes I didn't even know I'm doing it. Anything will influence me. Therefore . . . I think it's fine. Just keep watching things and doing things and getting involved in things, it all influences you and you don't dry up. Cough it up, you cough it up in your work. Of course the

Hollywood stuff influenced me a lot, but then also Warhol, Jack Smith. . . all of it.

*You knew Jack Smith—he was in your film *The Lovers of Eternity*. What is he like and where is he today?*

I did know him a little bit when I was in New York, because I made a movie, my last 8mm movie at that time, with ah. . . Dave Letterburg who lived next door to him. Dave Letterburg used to make 8mm pictures, and he used to take the 8mm and put it in his oven and cook it. It looked like, ah, . . . texture of an eggplant, when you projected it, you know, the emulsion was all cracked. And he lived next door to Jack Smith. Of course, Jack Smith at that time was like the King of Underground pictures in New York. And you would think maybe because he was King he would act nobility, but he wasn't—he was crazy as a coot which he probably still is now. I guess you can call him mercurial? And I don't really relate to him too much, goes up and down too fast, too high and too low probably. I always admired his work, though. And I put him in a picture, and he was fine in the picture. Gets outta control once in a while, which is fine—let him get outta control. You want to get away from him anyway, so let him get out of control so you get a chance to get away from him.

You worked as a messenger for a greeting card company back then. What was that like? Did you lead a normal existence—whatever that is?

Now I did work for a greeting card company in New York, it was Norcross Greeting Cards. And it was mainly run by women, although Mr. Norcross was the big deal—I never met him, though. But it was run by women. And they were . . . amazons. Large, frightening, terrifying amazons, that walked the halls all made up and smelling of perfume. Madison Avenue type women, clacking down the halls. Frightening, terrifying figures. I don't know what was wrong with those women but . . . I do know what was wrong with those women, they had ulcers, some of them were eaten up alive . . . they were like men with wigs on. Wigs and make-up. And in fact some of them looked like Glenn Strange as the Frankenstein Monster, because, the faces were horrid. It was severe amazons. I worked at that job many, many years, and then I left that job—thank God—I can't remember how. And I was leading a normal existence, that you come home with a big coke, after work, you have a big meal and then you come home, you eat it and bloat, you get fat. Look like 40 when you are only 25. And that's. . . the normal existence.

Back in those early days in the Bronx, didn't you get most of your ideas in the subway tunnels, or going down to the subways or coming up from it—in those sooty stairwells?

I only went down to the subway when I started goin' to—well on a regular basis, goin' to school. And it was Junior High, or... High School. But it was an art school, and it was known at that time as the School of Industrial Art. And they changed it to Art and Design later after I



THUNDERCRACK!

graduated. But then I used to take the subways, and it was a hellish experience. Especially in the morning it was nightmarish because people weren't fully awake yet and the sub-conscious was still taking over. And they'd be groping on the subway, and sweating, and being mashed together. . . and seeing violent fights erupt. And seeing humanity squeezed together—it was a hideous sight, a hideous experience. So the ideas I got from there were no good, the subways. They were truly *underground* experiences and they underground warping experiences for my later life probably.

Didn't you shoot most of those first movies on Bronx tenement rooftops?

I did shoot a lot of early movies in the Bronx on the rooftops because we needed bright light. We didn't have light at that time, in the beginning, you know—artificial light. We weren't into that yet so we needed the sun. And we needed black backgrounds so that you couldn't see that we had no sets. This way you could *invent*—see the black background and maybe invent in your mind an imaginary set. And that was a current trend at that time, on television, they used to have the actors act with just a step-ladder and a black backdrop. I guess it was avant-garde at that time in TV of the fifties. And so, I carried it over into film, but the pictures were—would begin bright but then get darker and darker as stratus clouds would move in. We were always making pictures when a warm front was approaching, and the clouds would thicken and thicken and so by the end of the 50 foot reel of film you couldn't see the finale, it was just too dark. The camera only opened up to F-2 maybe? Couldn't squeeze a 1.9. And so the pictures got murkier and murkier and darker at the end.

So what if you had grown up in Los Angeles or... Orange County? Or Yugoslavia? Would the inspiration still have been there?

Well, I don't know about growin' up in L.A. I probably would've drove, be drivin' a car by now. Had a tan. I don't know... I didn't get to L.A. until... late 70s? Mid 70s? I don't know where my inspiration would've been.

George, you've always had a deep love of Tornados: In A Town Called Tempest (1961) there's a great special effect of a tornado destroying a town, while the more recent Weather Diaries (video) seems centered on tornado lust and longing.

Yeah, I did like storms, and twisters, tornados. I don't know why. I think in the fifties a big one had gone through Worcester, Massachusetts. And I guess there was talk about it in New York, and it was in the news, and for some reason it excited me. The great storm smashing up towns and blowing into people's lives, and changing it. Not so much that I was interested in the carnage, but the fact of... whirling clouds and big winds and stuff like that. It was weather on the rampage, it was nature unleashed, nature loosed. It was dramatic. From all descriptions the sky is a weird color, the clouds are boiling. It struck my fancy. And I think most people that are interested in meterology are fascinated by that particular character in meterology, the tornado.

When you first met John Waters, didn't you get together and talk about tornados?

Yeah, John Waters came over to the house and I showed him my tomado books—I collect literature on tornados. Any visual material I can get. We discussed this. He's got some of the books.

What do you cook up when you're at home? Any recipes for readers out there? I heard you once made spaghetti and didn't have any spaghetti sauce so you used mushroom soup? George, is this true?

Now as far as cooking I don't remember ever using mushroom soup with spaghetti. It's probably true though. When I was trying to begin to cook I would make weird mixtures. But I cook on a hot-plate now. I don't have a stove in my apartment, it's just a hot-plate. And I like cookin' on a hot-plate. It's fast, and you watch television and they got all these cooks cookin' on hot-plates anyway. I cook one meal a day at home, the other times I eat out. I don't enjoy cookin' for myself, and I don't enjoy cookin' for other people. There's always a mess of dishes, and the food I make is not that good. Plus it's gasey. I'm subjected to hours and hours of gas afterward. So, I'd much rather eat out, although you gotta be careful where you eat out because with Chinese food now I bloat. I eat Chinese food and I bloat. It's frightening. Blow up like a balloon. So, I don't eat too much Chinese food now. But San Francisco's very notorious for its restaurants. There's a lot of them.

And it seems silly for me to just stay in my house when I could go out and get a meal... in a place that's supposed to be famous for its restaurants. At least one meal a day. And you can get some good stuff, and it's cheap too, some places are very cheap. I have no real recipes. My brother cooks much better than I do, and he stays at home and cooks. And sometimes he makes awful spicy garbage. Greasy junk. Like eggplant that would wreck your system. He's had guests over and the pain evidently registers on their faces just before they have to go to the bathroom. Sometimes they're rather distinguished or continental people and they eat his food and they splatter up our bowl. They have to run into the toilet and really let loose, so that it splatters on the rim of the bowl. So his meals are not always that good either.

Didn't you once do an interview with Al Goldstein of Screw magazine?

I don't think I ever did do an interview with Al Goldstein of Screw magazine. I did use to buy Screw magazine, I used to read it for the ads in the back. Sometimes I used to answer the sex ads in the back. This was in my youth. And I met... strange people.

end...



George in THE WEATHER DIARIES (1986)

NEW! NEW! NEW!

PEENY WEENY SEZ:

**PEENY
WEENY
SAFE SEX
T-SHIRTS**



100% COTTON
L & XL ONLY

\$10 PPD (OF COURSE)

MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO
SCOTT MITCHELL.

P.W. T-SHIRTS, 485 ALLEN, CLAWSON, MI 48017

FREE LATEX CONDOM!
W/PURCHASE

FUNGUS RODEO

MAKES TRENDY PEOPLE SHIT BLOOD.

A ONE-SHOT MAGAZINE
BY STEVE RAYMOND
& CHRIS GORE

GET
WITH
IT.



YOUR LAST
CHANCE
TO GET
THIS ASTOUNDING
PUBLICATION!

JUST LOOK AT WHAT YOU GET!
INTERVIEW WITH JACK 'KING' KIRBY
WILDMAN FISCHER
LETTERS FROM CHARLES MANSON
RECIPES FROM THE ANARCHIST COOKBOOK
GERBILING: THE STRAIGHT POOP

\$2 CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO
FILM THREAT, PO BOX 951, ROYAL OAK, MI 48068

VIDEO SPECIALISTS

GIANT 14,000 Title Catalog!

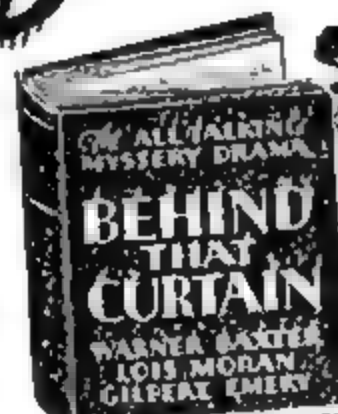
SEND
\$2 FOR
CATALOG!



**BRAIN of
BLOOD**

STARRING
BOB TAYLOR
DAVID WILLIAMS
NEED HADLEY
REBECCA CARRON

in
Blood-curdling
color
\$19.95



ALL TALKING
MYSTERY DRAMA
**BEHIND
THAT
CURTAIN**
WARNER BAXTER
LOIS MORAN
GILBERT EMERY
WITH BORIS KARLOFF.

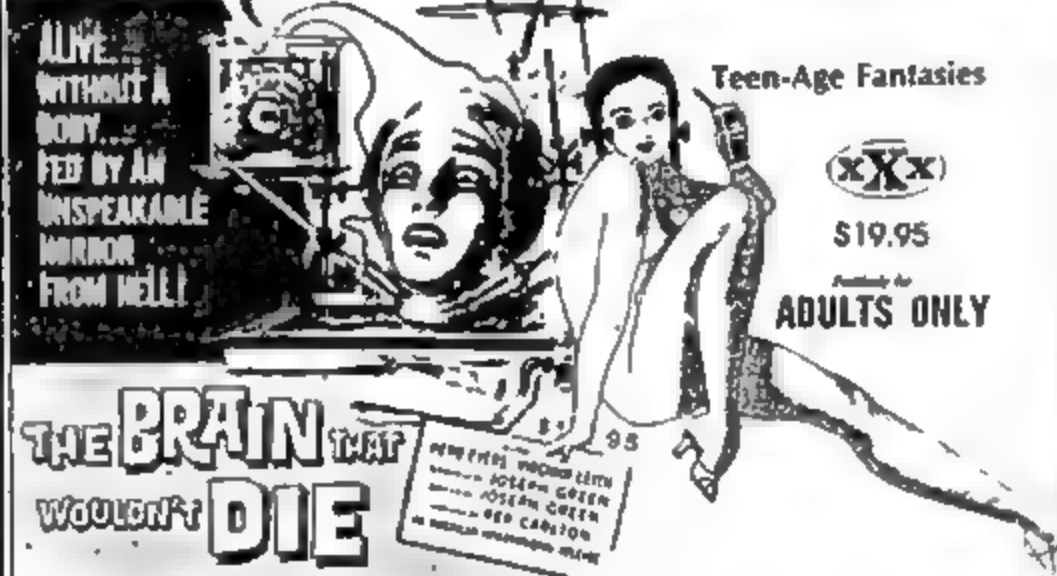


\$19.95
FANTASTIC
RITUAL OF
THE
BLOOD-HUNTERS
Robert
Clarke
Steve Coats
TERROR
OF THE
BLOOD-
HUNTERS



\$19.95
REX LEASE
1952
THE
MONSTER
WALKS

\$19.95



**THE BRAIN THAT
WOULDN'T
DIE**

PERFECT
JOHN LEECH
JOSEPH GREEN
JOSEPH GREEN
RED CARLTON

Teen-Age Fantasies

(XXX)

\$19.95

Adults Only

**WE SPECIALIZE IN RARE, HARD TO FIND. THEME
MYSTERIES, WESTERNS, SCI-FI, HORROR,
FANTASY, MYSTERY, FOREIGN & MORE!**

VIDEO SPECIALISTS INTERNATIONAL
182 JACKSON STREET, DEPT FT
DALLAS, PA 18612

Phone: (717) 675-0227 - 9AM till midnight I S I

7 DAYS A WEEK

'We've got what the others don't'

UPS SHIPPING (STREET ADDRESS REQUIRED)
PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENTS ADD 6% SALES TAX
(PA. TAXES SHIPPING CHARGES)
VISA/MASTERCARD ACCEPTED



SINS OF THE FLESH

AN EROTIC BOUTIQUE TO OUTFIT YOUR CAST SPECIALIZING IN CULT FILM ATTIRE

NO  **LEATHER**

117 W. 3RD ST.
ROYAL OAK, MICHIGAN 48067
313-541-3979

**WHEN IN SWEDEN,
VISIT THE LOCAL LOWLIFE
SCUM HEAVEN.
OUR STORE!**



**GET YER RARE
U.S./EURO/
PUNK/H-C/NU
WAVE FROM
KUGELBERG
N. FOGELBERG
S.G. 98
5-41128
GOTHENBURG,
SWEDEN**

**BUY,
SELL,
TRADE
FANZINES!
I DO
EUROPEAN
DISTRIBUTION!**

ASSOCIATION ACTEON, AES-NHIL PRODUCTIONS, A.K. ALIEN ARTISTS, ARTCORE EDITIONS, ARURU, AOM, ATROCITY, BAIN TOTAL, BIRTHBITER, BROKEN FLAG, LISA CARVER, CAUSE AND EFFECT, CHRIST & CO. LTD, CLUB MORAL, COSTES CASSETTE, CTHULU RECORDS, DISCOS Y CINTAS E.G., DOM DOM AMERICA, DSA DISTRIBUTION, ELECTRO-INSTITUT, FREEDOM IN A VACUUM, FRONT DE L'EST, GENERATIONS UNLIMITED, IDLE HOLE RECORDS, KORM PLASTICS, L.A.Y.L.A.H. ANTIRECORDS, LAD-FRITH, LE SYNDICAT, MALDOROR, MML MONOCHROME TAPES, MUSLINGAUZE, NECRONOMICON, ODD-SIZE, PLACEBO RECORDS, POETS/PAINERS/COMPOSERS, PROEKOS PRODUCTIONS, PSYCHEDELIC, RADIUM 226.05, RRR-RECORDS, SEE/HEAR, SKELETON AKUSTIK, S.J. ORGANIZATION, SOUND OF PIG MUSIC, STAALPLAAT/STAALTAPE, SUPERNATURAL ORGANIZATION, TELLUS, UNITED DIARIES, V-2 ORGANIZATION, WORLD SURREALIST NETWORK SYSTEM, ZSF PRODUKTS, STRENGTH THROUGH JOY, ZAMICO DISTRIBUTION, LIVE SERIES TAPES, NICHOLAS COLLINS, COLD MEAT INDUSTRY, RONCO TOPOL, JANGKI RECORDS, BOG ART PRODUCTS, ACHE RECORDS, EXTREME, AQUILIER SODALTY, AN INTENSIVE INCENTIVE PRODUCT(ION), SUSAN LAWLEY RECORDS, RAF RECORDS, BIZARR VERLAG, JOEPF/ARTWARE, SELEKTIN OPTIK, P.R.O.V.I.S.I.O.N., XXX/RRR, DEATHTRIP FILMS AND VIDEOS, FILM THREAT, PENETRATION FMS AND VIDEOS (EX-WEIRDO FILMS), SEELAND RECORDS, M/W/F CLUB, IKON, CINEMAKABRE VIDEO, TARGET VIDEO, FRESH SOUNDS INC., CLUB MORAL VIDEO, BRIGADE ZEITGEWINN, MICHAEL SAUP, FOUNDATION RAELEENNE, AMOK PRESS, JOE COLEMAN, FILMFAUST VERLAG, LUNG LEG, MURDER CAN BE FUN, RE/SEARCH, IL SORRISO VERTICALE, THE UNDERGROUND FILM BULLETIN, FILM THREAT, THE FINAL ACADEMY, APOCALYPSE CULTURE, HIGH WEIRDNESS BY MAIL, PANDEMONIUM 2, RADIUM 226.05 MAG., N.D., FILM-X, S.I.A.M. NEWSLETTER, \$8 TO 1, OUT OF DEPRESSION, A.I.D.S., LINDLEY BHANK, ETC.

**ITEMS FROM ALL THESE FINE POINTS
ALL AROUND DISTRIBUTION**

ARTWARE
Uwe Hemm-Furholter
Taunusstraße 38
6200 Wiesbaden
W. Germany



ARTWARE
Donna Klem
Taunusstraße 63/B
6200 Wiesbaden
W. Germany

INCOGNITO

MAIL ORDER



TRADE SHOWS FOR '89

JAN • N.Y. BOUTIQUE SHOW #3206
JAN • MIAMI ACTION SPORTS
JAN • N.Y. NANSB #1377
JAN • N.Y. F.A.E. SHOW

EXPERIENCED SALES REPS NEEDED NATIONWIDE

WHOLESALE INQUIRIES (313) 548-2980

RETAIL LOCATION

INCOGNITO - 323 S. MAIN
ROYAL OAK, MI 48067

CIRCLE DESIRED SELECTIONS THEN
 CLIP-OFFRIGHT SIDE OF AD AND SEND
 TO: INCOGNITO, P.O. BOX 961,
 ROYAL OAK, MI 48068, (313)
 548-2980. INCLUDE METHOD OF
 PAYMENT MASTERCARD, VISA, AM.
 EXPRESS, CREDIT CARD & SIGNATURE
 & EXP. DATE - OR IF PAYING BY CHECK
 INCLUDE DRIVER'S LIC. & BIRTH DATE
 -OR SEND MONEY ORDER. ADD \$1.25
 PER ITEM FOR POSTAGE. ALLOW 2-4
 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY.

362



- A. BLACK MATTE W/TINT LENS \$15
- B. AMBER TORT. MATTE W/TINT \$15
- C. WINE TORT. MATTE W/TINT \$15
- D. GREEN TORT. MATTE W/TINT \$15

364



- A. BLACK MATTE W/TINT LENS \$15
- B. AMBER TORT. MATTE W/TINT \$15
- C. WINE TORT. MATTE W/TINT \$15
- D. GREEN TORT. MATTE W/TINT \$15

312



- A. TORT. FRAME W/TINT CLIP-ON \$35
- B. BLACK FRAME W/TINT CLIP-ON \$35

365



- A. TORT. FRAME W/TINT LENS \$15
- B. BLACK FRAME W/TINT LENS \$15

378



- A. WINE TORT. MATTE W/TINT
LENS \$20
- B. GREEN TORT. MATTE W/TINT \$20

358



- A. GOLD FRAME W/TINT LENS \$18
- B. SILVER FRAME W/TINT LENS \$18
- C. BLACK FRAME W/TINT LENS \$18

84



- A. TORT. FRAME W/TINT LENS \$10
- B. TORT. FRAME W/CLEAR LENS \$19
- C. GREY FRAME W/TINT LENS \$19
- D. GREY FRAME W/CLEAR LENS \$19

78



- A. BLACK MATTE FRAME W/TINT \$12
- B. DARK TORT. FRAME W/TINT \$12
- C. LIGHT TORT. FRAME W/TINT \$12
- D. GREEN TORT. FRAME W/TINT \$12
- E. BLACK FRAME W/CLEAR LENS \$12
- F. TORT. FRAME W/CLEAR LENS \$12
- G. BLK FRAME W/TINT CLIP-ON \$20
- H. GREEN TORT. FRAME W/TINT
CLIP-ON \$20

INDESTRUCTIBLE



BREATH TAKING

Illustrator Michael Saenz, creator of the ground breaking computer generated graphic novels SHATTER and IRON MAN, has created four fantastic futuristic paintings.

Reproduced in full color on high quality stock, enclosed in a protective envelope. The first plate of each portfolio has been signed and numbered by the artist. There will be no reprints of this limited edition.

Fifteen dollars postpaid. Allow two weeks for delivery.

HIERO-GRAPHIC PUBLICATIONS
PO BOX 562
WYANDOTTE, MICHIGAN 48192

JOE CHRIST ANSWERS FIVE (5) MAJOR QUESTIONS!

Q--What are your five favorite films?

A--LET'S SEE...IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER, UM, I GUESS "DESPERATE LIVING", UM, "BASKET CASE", "RE-ANIMATOR" IS ONE OF MY TOP FIVE, FOR SURE..."MAKE THEM DIE SLOWLY", OK, THAT'S FOUR. FOR THE FIFTH, IT'S A TOSS UP BETWEEN "2000 MANIACS", "EVIL DEAD", AND "BLOOD DINER".

Q--Make up five film titles that you think are funny, and would like to see used in the future, either by yourself or some other film maker.

A--OK, WELL, UM...WELL, I'D LIKE TO USE ALL OF THESE MYSELF. "ROAD KILL", "PIG PARTY", "EMERGENCY ROOM, LIVE!", "TRAILER PARK TRASH", AND "SPECIAL OLYMPICS MASSACRE". SO, THERE YOU GO, HA HA, MY NEXT FIVE FILMS! "SPECIAL OLYMPICS MASSACRE", HA HA, JEEZ!

Q--Name your five favorite actresses.

A--THIS COULD INSULT SOMEONE I KNOW IF I LEAVE THEM OUT, BUT, MINK STOLE, I'VE LOVED HER FOR FIFTEEN YEARS, AND ALSO MARY VIVIAN PEARCE. SHE'S BEEN THE SOURCE OF A LITTLE BIT OF "ONANISM" ON MY PART...OF COURSE, MARY LEONH AND DANA WISDOM, THE FEMALE STARS OF MY FILM, "COMMUNION IN ROOM 410". THAT IS A TIE FOR THEM, OK? ALSO MARGARET HAYES, SHE WAS IN "BLACKBOARD JUNGLE" AND A FEW OTHER THINGS. I LIKE HER BECAUSE MY GRANDMOTHER TOLD ME THAT MY GRANDFATHER HAD AN AFFAIR WITH HER, AND I DON'T THINK MY GRANDMA WOULD LIE. AND, LAST, BUT NOT LEAST, MY CURRENT BIG CRUSH, RIKKI LAKE.

Q--What are five things crucial to your films, or films in general?

A--THAT'S EASY! SEX, VIOLENCE, GRAPHIC VIOLENCE, THAT IS, INSANITY, PERVERSION, AND SOME TYPE OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE BEING OVERDONE IN A DESTRUCTIVE MANNER. ANY FILM THAT I LIKE HAS TO HAVE SOME COMBINATION OF AT LEAST THREE OF THOSE THINGS, OR AT LEAST AN EXTREMELY HEAVY DOSE OF ONE OR MORE. OF COURSE, MY FILMS CONTAIN ALL OF THAT WITHOUT A PLOT TO HINDER THE ACTION.

Q--Name five spontaneous events that you'd like to happen upon with a loaded movie camera in your hands.

A--OH, WONDERFUL! AN ARMED ROBBERY, PREFERABLY ONE WHERE SOMEONE GETS HURT. OK...UM, OK, A BRUTAL RAPE. A FRESH VEHICLE-PEDESTRIAN WISAP, YOU KNOW, BEFORE THE POLICE AND MEDICS ARRIVE. WHAT ELSE? LET'S SEE, OH YEAH, A WELL KNOWN PUBLIC SERVANT HAVING AN ENCOUNTER WITH A PROSTITUTE IN A CAR, PREFERABLY ONE OF HIS OR HER OWN GENDER...SO, THAT MAKES FOUR, AND I'M NOT GOING TO TELL YOU THE FIFTH, BECAUSE IT'LL BE MY NEXT FILM.

"COMMUNION in room 410!"

The by-now infamous short film featuring JOE CHRIST, MARY LEONH, & DANA WISDOM. The three of them make a big mess when Mary carves herself up with an X-acto knife & other sharp objects, etc, with a little help from Joe. After Joe wrings the dripping wounds into a hotel drinking glass, Dana quaffs about a pint, before Joe, no longer able to contain himself, begins to lick the crimson ooze directly from Mary's arms and...other parts.

THIS IS THE REAL THING! Nothing is faked! When Mary sliced her nipples with a double edged razor blade, even the camera & prop crew had to look the other way! Then the three of them break bread in a hideous parody of a Christian ritual. Mind-numbing soundtrack by BRIAN WALKER/PSYCHOACOUSTICS.

"COMMUNION IN ROOM 410!".....18 minutes.....VHS.....\$14.98ppd.

"If you can't stand the sight of a woman slashing herself with a razor, just for the sake of slashing herself with a razor, then trust me, skip it..." Clay McNear, Dallas Observer.

"Calling this film 'tasteless' is like, it's like calling the Titanic disaster a boating accident!" President of Dallas-area film to video transfer company, refusing to do it.

"I JUST THANK GOD MY THOUGHTS ARE PURE"

This is a video-taped chronicle of the performance that made Joe's band members all quit! When the guys saw this video, and realized just how sickening the performance was from the audience's point of view, they hit the dusty trail for a more "commercial" musical venture. This video shows the audience, too stunned to get up and walk out, sitting in their seats in awe as our hero, Mr Christ, dressed as a priest, uses power tools to mutilate a severed pigs head. This after he donned a crown o' thorns & a 10-inch plastic strap-on, you-know-what! Bad enough, but Joe, why did you pack that dildo with 2 pints of stage blood? Oh, noooooo...This is a really sick performance, mocking things that society holds sacred. Even after flabbergasted club employees turned off the power to the stage, the spe tacle continued for five more minutes! Indeed, it actually got worse!

"I JUST THANK GOD MY THOUGHTS ARE PURE!".....11 minutes.....VHS.....\$9.98ppd.

Order BOTH videos on one tape !!.....only \$19.98ppd.

Order BOTH videos on separate tapes\$24.96ppd.

ALSO, GET THESE VINYL RECORDS BY "JOE CHRIST & THE HEALING FAITH":

"WONDERFUL LIFE" 7-inch single.....\$1.98ppd.

The snappy, happy theme song from "COMMUNION IN ROOM 410!"

"THE HEALING FAITH E.P." 12-inch 6 song ep.....\$4.98ppd.

Six bright & cheerful tunes that would have you thinking that Joe is a "nice guy".



JOE CHRIST



MARY LEONH

SEND CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO:

JOE CHRIST
po box 223803
DALLAS, TX 75222



DANA WISDOM



JOE CHRIST

BACK ISSUE BLOW OUT!



ANTHOLOGY. THE BEST OF ISSUES #1-8. Articles, Comics, Inside info. Full glossy, Limited Edition, only 2,000 numbered copies. 60 pgs.

HURRY \$4.95



#9 Interviews with Terry Gilliam, Sam Rami, Josh Becker, Scott Spiegel, Article by Emile de Antonio, Brainwashed American, Peeny Weeny, Hail Mary Protest in Detroit, comics and MORE! 48 pgs.

NOW JUST \$1.99



#10 The Cinematrocities of Nick Zedd, I Can't Believe They Asked Me For Money at the Movies, Stallone Buttfuck Contest, Film Questionnaire, comics, politics, and LESS! 52 pgs.

ONLY .99¢ CHEAP



#12 Exclusive interview with Alan Moore, Hate Mail from Harlan Ellison, Sam Rami, Emile de Antonio, Lung Leg, Tommy Turner, SLY BF CONTEST, Peeny Weeny, Kern and Lydia Kicked Out of the Ritz, Mass Murder Movies. 72 pgs.

NOW \$2.47



#13 SPECIAL FLIP CARTOON cover by Glenn Barr, Famous Extra: George Stover, Charles Bukowski, German filmmaker Rosa Von Praunheim, Cool Teenager from the Planet X, Alfred Hitchcock Comic, Sam Rami the King of Super 8. 60 pgs.

JUST \$4.98



#14 BLOODY BULLET HOLE cover by D.W. Higgins, Famous Extra: Jello Biafra, The Doorman, Kenneth Anger, Faustus Bidgood, John Waters on HAIRSPRAY, The scoop on the real HONEYMOON KILLERS, Movieland U.S.A., and more Sleaze Cinema. 52 pgs.

ONLY \$1.99



#15 MOVIE SET WRAPAROUND cover by G.L. Barr, Russ Meyer interview, Alphaville, Betaville, The NYC Film Fest, A Protest, Jello Biafra pt. 2, The Imprisonment of Nick Zedd, Little Aurora the Martyred Child, Plague on Film, and a special Divine memorial. 60 pgs.

JUST \$2.96



#16 SCREENWRITER'S SUICIDE Cover by Fack Morris, Interviews with Jean Hill, Rockets Redglare, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, George Romero, KULTZ by Steve Bissette, Charles Manson movies, Independent films: White & Lazy, Urge, also The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T, The Cinema of Transgression & more! 60 pgs.

ONLY \$3.95

LAST CHANCE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE OUTRAGEOUS PRICES! OFFER GOOD THROUGH DECEMBER 31ST, 1988. ORDERS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY THIS FORM OR A PHOTOCOPY. ONLY U.S. FUNDS ACCEPTED. CANADIAN & FOREIGN ORDERS ADD \$1.00 PER ISSUE. CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO FILM THREAT: BACK ISSUE BLOW OUT, PO BOX 951, ROYAL OAK, MI 48068 USA

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

☐ ANTHOLOGY #1-8 \$4.95
☐ #9 \$1.98
☐ #10 .99¢
☐ #11 (NOT PICTURED) \$10.00

☐ #12 \$2.47
☐ #13 \$4.98
☐ #14 \$1.99
☐ #15 \$2.96
☐ #16 \$3.95

TOTAL COST OF BOOKS _____
ADD .75¢ P & H per issue _____
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

FILM THREAT
T-SHIRTS.

NOTHING STOPS SOME PEOPLE
FROM GETTING ONE.



James Dean's Grave models the AXE shirt.



☐ LOGO

☐ AXE

S

M

L

XL



ONLY \$10 POSTPAID. 2-COLOR • 100% COTTON

INDICATE SIZE, STYLE AND QUANTITY. CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO
FILM THREAT. ALLOW 2-4 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY.

ATTENTION DEALERS! WRITE US FOR WHOLESALE PRICES.

**FILM THREAT TEE
PO BOX 951
ROYAL OAK, MI 48068**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

CANADIAN ORDERS ADD \$3 FOREIGN ORDERS ADD \$5

CLASSIFIEDS

\$8 for 20 words. \$3 each add'l 10 words. C'mon it's cheap. Send yours now! FT CLASSIFIEDS, PO BOX 951, ROYAL OAK, MI 48068, USA. Indicate section you wish to be listed under. MAGAZINES, VIDEO, SERVICES, MISC., EVENTS, etc...

MAGAZINES

SUBSCRIBE TO NIGHTSHADES, art & fictional journal of the erotic and macabre. Pull out poster each issue. \$15 / 4 issues. Classifieds \$3 / line (Max 25 letters per line). Reply forwarding box \$3. Display ads as low as \$50. Subscriptions, ad copy, submissions: NIGHTSHADES, 5 N. Wabash, suite 1409, Dept. 122, Chicago, IL 60602

Subscribe to ECCO - THE WORLD OF BIZARRE VIDEO for Horror! Gore! Sleaze! Depravity! Plus reviews of videos you never knew existed! Join the ECCO cult. Send \$8 / six issues to ECCO, PO Box 65742, Washington, DC 20035. Sample \$1.50.

THE TRASH COMPACTOR, a disgusting guide to exploitation films, presents its Sick Fuck Movies issue. SEE: Bloodsucking freaks, 10 best castration films, naked love slaves, Toolbox Murders, sexual dysfunctions, Honeymoon Killers, dead mother fetishes, shocking sex tests and Tab Hunter! Send \$3.50 (plus \$1 P & H) to: THE TRASH COMPACTOR, 233A College St, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5T 1R4

FUNGUS RODEO. BE A HIPSTER. JACK "KING" KIRBY, CHARLES MANSON, WILDMAN FISCHER. \$2 TO: FUNGUS RODEO, PO BOX 951, ROYAL OAK, MI 48068

SKAMI! Horror, videos, gore! Thinking person's fanzine. \$2 sample. \$10 - 7 issues. Richard Akoyama, P.O. Box 7226, Honolulu, HI 96821-9998

SEEKING WRITERS for new publication about HORROR / TERROR / GORE / SEX / SYBIL DANNING. Into ARGENTO / ELSASS / LINNEA Q / LANNA CLARKSON / & EVIL DEAD stuff! Write: Row: 77 Newbern Ave., Medford, MA 02155

THE SHOCK REVIEW. Illustrated horror & exploitation newsletter. \$4 for 6 issues or \$1 sample to: Tom Stockman, 1435 Sprule, St. Louis, MO 63139

VIDEO

IMPORT / UNDERGROUND VIDEOS. Bukowski, Godard, Fassbinder, Pasolini, Jodorowsky, etc. SASE catalog. MONDO VIDEO, 154 Big Spring Cir, Cookeville, TN 38501

"WE'VE GOT WHAT THE OTHERS DON'T!" WE SPECIALIZE IN RARE, HARD TO FIND. B-Mysteries / Sci-Fi / Horror / Fantasy / Westerns / Serials / Comedies / and more! As profiled on Playboy Channel News. VHS / BETA illustrated lists. GIANT 14,000 title catalog! Large SASE to: VIDEO SPECIALISTS INTERNATIONAL, 182 Jackson St V-M, Dallas, PA 18612

SERVICES

VIDEO TRANSFER: NTSC TO PAL / PAL TO NTSC. \$30 per hour plus tape. Contact: P. DeMatia, 8 Haddon Rd, Hewitt, NJ 07421 (201) 853-4420.

BRAINWATER PRODUCTIONS. Original soundtracks produced for independent films. Send \$2 for sample cassette. JIM OLENSKI, 1800 W. 14 mile Rd, Royal Oak, MI 48073

MISCELLANEOUS

PEENY WEENY "SAFE SEX" T-SHIRTS, 100% cotton, available L & XL only. \$10 ppd. Make check or money order to Scott Mitchell. Send to: P.W. T's, 485 Allen, Clawson, MI 48017

WANTED: "HEP", & "GO CAT" music rags. Send price and condition. J. Shaw, 320 S. Main St, Royal Oak, MI 48067

THE NICK ZEDD APPRECIATION SOCIETY. Send for FREE mysterious info. N.Z.A.S., PO Box 1589, New York, NY 10009

DEAN MEMORABILIA - Trading cards, clippings, magazines. LITTLE SHOP OF FANTASY, 411 Decatur, New Orleans, LA 70118

EVENTS

FREE listings for festivals and events. Send a release exactly as you want it printed. 100 words max.

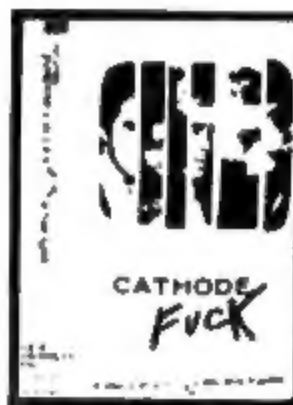
FAIR VISION RATIO, a national open screening and exchange program of new works in film and video, is seeking submissions for monthly screenings. Send tapes in 3/4", VHS, or Super 8, 16mm film with stamped return mailer to: Fair Vision Ratio, 911 Contemporary Arts, 518 Jones Bldg, 1331 Third Ave, Seattle, WA 98101. We also have a compilation tape of Seattle area works available for screening. Contact Alan Pruzan at (206) 682-6552.

VIDEO / FILMMAKERS West coast exposure and involvement in terrific event in television can be taken advantage of now. Work on video is being accepted for TRAUMA TV, a 30 min. show airing weekly on cable channel 25 in San Francisco. We're dedicated to serve as a showcase for video / filmmakers / performers—especially those whose works can be described as bizarre, humorous, disturbing, or beyond the limits of good taste. Send videotapes or inquiries to: TRAUMA TV, 2261 Market St, suite 328, SF, CA 94114-1693. Ph # (415) 861-7226

SCREENWORKS FILM FESTIVAL 1989 is the world's first feature-length collection of scenes from the best not-yet-produced feature screenplays ever written. Screenings in Hollywood and San Diego, CA. Entries are currently being accepted on film or videotape. No entry fee. Deadline: December 20, 1988. For details & entry form send long SASE to: SCREENWORKS, 5666 La Jolla Blvd., suite 92, La Jolla, CA 92037. Ph# (619) 264-3837

THE THIRD LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION CELEBRATION! The festival is open to films in 16mm, 35mm, videos in 3/4" and 1/2" (U.S. standard) VHS and BETA. Entry deadline November 30, 1988. All entries must have been completed after January 1, 1985. L.A. Animation Competition, 2222 South Barrington Ave, LA, CA 90064. Ph# (213) 473-6701

VIDEO CUT-UPS



CATHODE FUCK

Entertainment and politics through the Cathode rays. Assorted video cuts such as Public Image Limited's only appearance on American Bandstand, the Hail Mary premiere in Detroit, a McDonald's corporation training film on courtesy, Neo-Nazis, The Clash, Phil Donahue with Parents of Punkers, John Lydon interview on the Tomorrow Show and more funny news footage. appx 120 minutes



TV SPHINCTER

More cut-ups and rare footage. Sexual harassment in the workplace, a gynecological exam, a medical training tape on catheter tube insertion, Penn State Treasurer shoots himself in the head on national TV, a rattlesnake convention in Texas, and murder in Detroit city. Recommended to those with a cast-iron stomach. appx. 120 minutes

\$25 EACH OR BOTH FOR \$49.98!

CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO FILM THREAT. SEND TO: FILM PRODUCTS, PO BOX 951, ROYAL OAK, MI 48068

TV SPHINCTER VHS/BETA CATHODE FUCK VHS/BETA

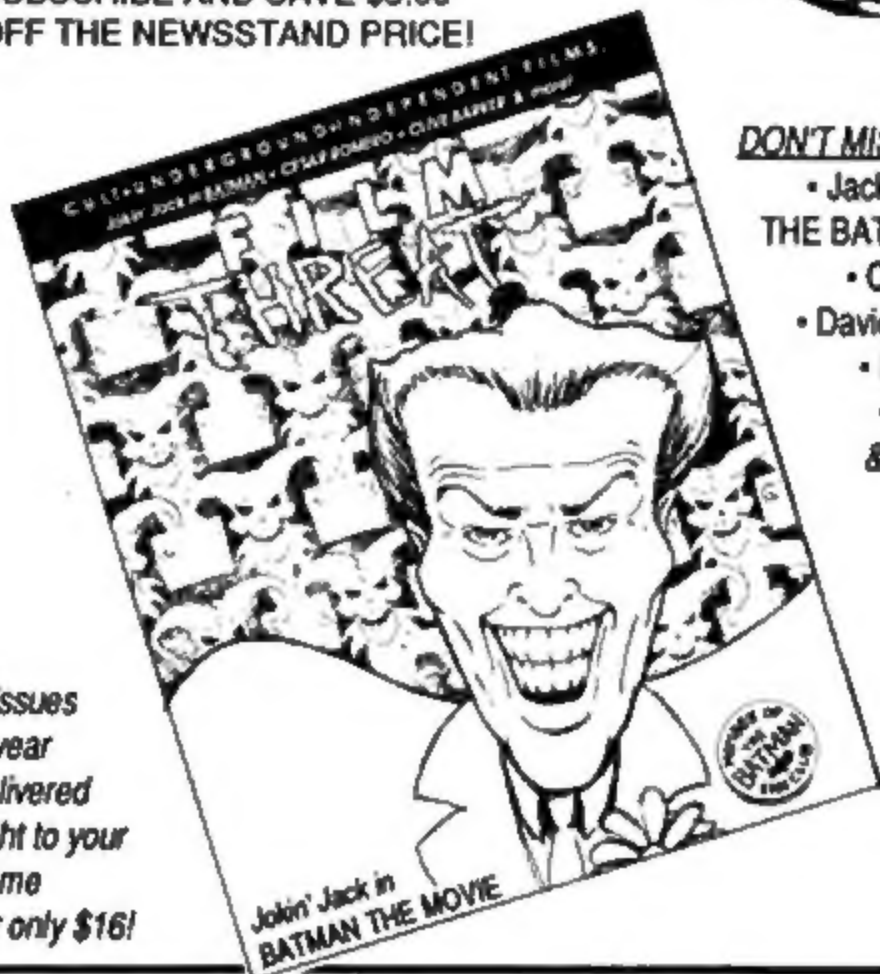
NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

WOW! Have you subscribed to Film Threat?

...if you haven't, ask someone who has!



SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE \$5.00
OFF THE NEWSSTAND PRICE!



6 issues
a year
delivered
right to your
home
for only \$16!

DON'T MISS ISSUE #18

- Jack Nicholson in
THE BATMAN MOVIE
- Cesar Romero
- David Cronenberg
- Harvey Pekar
- Clive Barker
- & more of your
cult faves!

SEND MY SUBSCRIPTION NOW!

☐ \$16 U.S. ☐ \$21 CAN ☐ \$26 FOREIGN

Check or money order (US Funds) made out to FILM THREAT
Send to: SUBS, PO BOX 951, ROYAL OAK, MI 48068 USA

Start my subscription with issue # _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE ZIP _____

We've got
the stuff
dreams
are
made
of!

CINEMA COLLECTORS Posters, Photos & Books



CINEMA COLLECTORS
Posters, Photos & Books.

Store Hours: 11 am-7 pm Mon.-Wed.
11 am-10 pm Thur.-Fri. 10 am-7 pm Sat.

1507 Wilcox Ave. • Hollywood, CA 90028 • (213) 461-6516
(In the heart of Hollywood at Sunset & Wilcox)

© MCMLXXXVI CINEMA COLLECTORS

Beam yourself over to our Hollywood Coordinates and explore our free 10-page brochure & order guide. Dracula, Frankenstein, Bond, Hammer, Star Wars, Raiders, Chaney, Karloff, Lugosi — over 400,000 original movie posters & lobby cards, 2 million colour and b&w photos, star portraits, and special effects shots, plus tens of thousands of domestic and foreign programs, books, photoplays, banners, and absolutely the most comprehensive selection of memorabilia spanning the entire history of every genre of the motion picture! Come in, call, or write today for your free copy —